Mr. Speaker, President

Obama’s decision to scrap a long-range,

European-based missile defense shield

was not only met with concern among

our European allies, but more importantly

has sounded alarms here at

home where the President’s action will

leave the Nation vulnerable to Iranian

long-range missile attack.

Three years ago, in response to growing

threats from Iran, the U.S. developed

plans to install a missile defense

system in Eastern Europe to protect

Europe and the United States from potential

long-range missile attack.

Under the program, 10 interceptor missiles

would be located in Poland and a

radar station would be built in the

Czech Republic by 2013. The European-based

missile defense system would add

an additional layer of defense to the

continental United States, which already

has a small network of interceptors

on the west coast.

The European-based missile defense

shield was endorsed by our NATO allies,

who called it a ‘‘substantial contribution

to their collective security.’’

Now, the Obama administration has

taken the unusual and highly questionable

position of canceling the planned

European-based missile defense system

in favor of a scaled-back program that

will not be ready until 2020.

The threat represented by Iran is real

and growing. Last February, Iran

launched a satellite, demonstrating

substantial progress toward achieving

a reliable long-range missile program.

A month later, the head of the U.S. European

Command testified before the

House Armed Services Committee that

Iran would be able to deploy an intercontinental

ballistic missile, an ICBM,

capable of reaching all of Europe and

parts of the United States by the year

2015.

The President stated his decision was

based upon reduced threats from Iran

and greater cost efficiency of his alternative

defense system—and anyone

watching the news knows that there is

no diminished threat from Iran. However,

a July 2008 classified report produced

by the Institute for Defense

Analyses concluded that the European-based

missile defense system that the

administration now wants to cancel

would, in fact, be the most cost effective.

I have called on the administration

to declassify this report so that all

of the facts can be known and we can

have a robust debate.

Moscow has made no secret of its opposition

to the European-based missile

defense system and has repeatedly

called for its elimination. Furthermore,

European leaders have heard

from Russian leaders. The Russians

have continually shown that they have

no intention of pressing Iran to drop

its nuclear and missile programs. For

its part, Iran also shows no willingness

to be deterred by Russia. Yet, the administration,

in courting Moscow assistance

in halting Iran’s nuclear missile

ambitions, has effectively chosen

to surrender America’s bargaining position

with its shelving of the proposed

missile defense system.

While the Obama administration’s

decision to reverse course on European

missile defense is being met with

smiles in Moscow, Americans have real

reason to be concerned. By the administration’s

own admission, its alternative

missile defense system will not

be able to be fully capable until 2020,

with intelligence indicating Iran will

have ICBM capability by 2015. This

means the United States could be vulnerable

to Iranian missile attack 5

years before the administration gets

its new missile defense system ready.

Not only is Iran near its goal of

launching ICBMs, reportedly, it has already

the ability to construct a nuclear

bomb. Last Thursday, a group of

experts at the International Atomic

Energy Agency stated, in a report obtained

by the Associated Press, that

Iran is already capable of building a

nuclear bomb and is on the way to developing

a missile system capable of

carrying an atomic warhead.

Remarkably, in the face of Iran’s blatant

actions to develop a nuclear weapons

program, the administration continues

to pursue a course of unilateral

disarmament. Earlier this year, the

President cut funding for missile interceptors

to be based in Alaska as part of

the ongoing construction of a homeland

missile defense system, reducing

the number of interceptors by one-third.

I opposed that move and offered

an amendment in the House to restore

the funding. Unfortunately, the President’s

cuts were sustained by a Democrat

majority of the House.

The administration’s record on missile

defense at a time when both North

Korea and Iran are seeking nuclear

weapons capable of reaching the United

States is troubling. This year, the administration

has cut missile defense by

$1.2 billion, reducing by one-third our

intended west coast shield which would

protect us from North Korea’s advancements

and has stopped a European-based

system intended to protect the

U.S. from Iranian missile threats. In

the face of known threats, this administration

needs to rededicate itself to

defense of the United States’ mainland.

It is now my honor to recognize our

ranking member of the House Armed

Services Committee, BUCK MCKEON,

who represents California’s 25th District,

was elected in 1991, has been a

leader in ensuring the United States

has adequate defense, both that our

troops have adequate equipment in

their conflicts but also in ensuring

that the United States has adequate

defense systems.

With that, I would like to recognize

Representative MCKEON.

Well, I want to thank

you, Representative MCKEON, our ranking

member on the House Armed Services

Committee. I want to thank you

for your leadership on the committee,

certainly for your leadership of ensuring

that we have a quality defense for

the United States and also for your

highlighting this important issue.

The issues that you’ve raised concerning

Iran are very important. It

should not be lost on anybody that, the

very day the administration released

its decision to drop the European site—

to walk away from the Czech Republic

and the Poles—the International

Atomic Energy Agency released its

statement that Iran was nuclear-capable,

that they were capable of making

a nuclear weapon.

This was on the very same day, as

you were saying, that the President

said that there was a downgraded

threat when, in fact, there is no evidence

that the threat has been downgraded.

I keep asking the administration

to provide us any evidence that

the threat is diminishing from long-range

ICBM threats from Iran, and we

have no information which would indicate

that.

Mr. AKIN, you raised a

very good point. I’d like you to speak

for a moment on this issue:

The European missile defense shield

that was intended for interceptors in

Poland and for the radar in the Czech

Republic was not just intended to protect

the United States. Although, it

would have provided protection to the

United States by 2013, with the President’s

plan not providing protection to

the United States, by their own Web

site admission, until 2020.

You make an important point that it

wasn’t just to protect us; it was also to

protect our European allies. In addition

to that, the Czechs and the Poles

had gone out on a limb.

There had been tremendous

pressure on them not to agree

to work with the United States.

For a moment, talk about what the

unilateralism of the Obama administration

does to those allies.

Representative AKIN,

to piggyback on what you’re saying

here, you’re making the point that the

system that was intended to be in Europe

was the system that would provide

the greatest capability at the lowest

cost.

You have a great reputation

with your leadership in the

House and for being the ranking member

of the Seapower and Expeditionary

Forces for the Armed Services Committee.

You were elected in 2001, and

you’ve got a great record of service.

One thing that, I think, is important

is that we don’t just have to take your

word for it. There is the Institute for

Defense Analyses’ unclassified excerpt

of the executive summary for the independent

assessment of the proposed deployment

of the ballistic missile defense

system in Europe. This was presented

to our subcommittee at the beginning

of this year. This was asked for

by the Democrat leadership to do an

assessment of exactly what you just

said—to compare the system that’s

being proposed by the administration

and the system that was intended to go

into Europe. This report, which is an

independent assessment, reads that the

most cost-effective way to protect the

United States was the system that this

President just scrapped.

Before we move on, I

would like to go to Representative

TRENT FRANKS who is the Chair of the

Missile Defense Caucus of Arizona’s

Second District, elected in 2003. We

were elected at the same time.

Representative FRANKS was talking

just today about the covert issue of

Iran and what they have announced

with their secondary site. You have

been a leader on this, both in highlighting

the issue, making sure that

the technical discussion goes forward

so people know what’s at risk and what

we have the capability of.

But on the threat side, this administration

has stepped forward and said

that we have a threat that is not the

same as we thought. They say it’s lessened.

Everybody else that I talked to

believes that it’s either increasing—but

no one will say that it is actually diminishing.

Representative FRANKS, I would love

for you to talk about the threat issue

to our families.

The important point, I

think, for the IAEA’s, International

Atomic Energy Agency, statement is

that they are saying it’s no longer theoretical.

I mean, we are not standing

on the House floor, the four of us, saying

that we are ringing a bell of the

threat to the United States. This independent

International Atomic Energy

Agency says that Iran has the capability

now, today. It’s not as if someone

is saying in projecting the future,

this independent agency, which is

charged for overseeing this, being the

agency that is supposed to know what

capability that countries have, has

made this announcement saying that

they are today capable of making a

bomb.

When you couple that with what Iran

has accomplished with their missiles,

having already put a satellite into

orbit, again, we are not talking theoretical

again. This is not as if we are

projecting that some day Iran is going

to have a missile. Iran used a missile to

place a satellite in orbit, the same

technology that you would be utilizing

in order to reach the continental

United States.

Those two technologies, the nuclear

capability and the missile technology

capability, are coming together to be a

real threat to the United States. Now,

here is the thing that just confuses me

most about the administration’s statements.

We know that the plan that they just

scrapped would have placed interceptors

and radar in Europe that would

have been available to protect the

United States from intercontinental

ballistic missiles projected by 2013,

could be 2014; 2013 is when it was projected

to be completed.

The President comes forward with

his plan and says Iran is going slower—

no indication that anyone has or that

we have that Iran is going slower—but

all intelligence says that Iran could

have this capability to reach the

United States with their nuclear weapon

by 2015. The President comes forward

with a plan that says we are

going to be ready and able to protect

the continental United States by 2020?

This is a gap of 5 years there, even if

you use the President’s numbers. You

use their numbers, you go to their Web

site and you see 2020. You see Iran’s capability

from all intelligence agencies

is 2015, and they could be sooner. As

Ranking Member MCKEON said, they

could buy it, or they could have advances.

But this President, sitting here in

2009 says, I don’t have to be prepared.

The next generation isn’t going to be

prepared for the next 11 years; 2020 is 11

years away; and he says, I am not

going to have the capability, I don’t

need the capability. I don’t need the

capability to protect ourselves from a

country that the International Atomic

Energy Agency says has the capability

to produce a nuclear weapon and where

our intelligence agencies say will have

the capability of a missile.

Representative FRANKS, I know you

have some thoughts on that.

You are right, the deterrence,

the deterrence effect it would

be.

Speak for a minute, Representative

FRANKS, on Russia because this also

amazes me. This President has had

Russia say to him abandon your missile

defense of the country. He has done

so without a concession from Russia.

At the same time he is on the eve of

going into the START negotiations

where Russia is going to be asking for

additional concessions from the United

States. But there are those in the

press, because I was on a couple of

talks shows, and they said, well, this

really isn’t about Russia because this

missile defense system was no threat

to Russia.

Why is it, if it’s no threat to Russia,

that Russia would be asking or that we

should be conceding? Do you really

think the administration is going to be

able to advance our security by putting

our missile defense system down for

Russia?

Representative

BISHOP, you were talking about the

issue of our industrial base. It has a

huge impact when we defund programs

because then we lose capabilities that

we currently have. If we are not making

these interceptors anymore, or if

we are lessening the number of interceptors,

then we are diminishing our

capabilities to defend ourselves.

But we pay a really great cost in the

issue of innovation. When you defund a

program, not only do you lose the intellectual

capital that’s there, but

what we want to do next suffers. I

know you have been a big advocate for

ensuring that we invest in our industrial

base and for ingenuity in the future.

What are your thoughts on what actions

that the administration has

taken, its impact now?

One of the things I find

fascinating about this administration’s

funding requests is that they’ve cut

ground-based missiles in Alaska.

They’ve cut the ground-based missiles

that were planned to go into Europe.

They have done so by trying to sell

that they’re committed to Aegis and

THAAD as defensive systems. And in

their plan that they put out upon canceling

the system in Europe, they said

we’re going to invest more heavily in

those systems.

Well, let’s look at what they really

did. Because, obviously, if they say

they’re going to do it, we’d all think

here that in this body, the legislation

that’s coming through this body would

reflect the administration’s commitment

to that.

However, although this administration

has talked about increasing theater

missile defense inventories, Aegis

and THAAD, and have added $900 million

in the budget, we’re not seeing the

sizable inventory increases reflected in

the budget. For example, in FY 2010,

the budget acquires less Aegis SM–3

interceptors than the initially projected

FY 2009.

So what does that mean? It means

that in FY 2009, when the budget came

through this House, there was a certain

level of purchases that had been indicated

for the SM–3 interceptors. And

what did the administration do? They

came in asking for less. The FY 2009

budget projected that 24 additional

SM–3s would be required in FY 2010;

yet the FY 2010 budget requests only

18.

Budget documents indicate that the

SM–3 inventory will grow from 133

interceptors to 329 within 5 years. Let’s

do that again. The budget documents

indicate that the SM–3 inventory is

supposed to grow from 133 interceptors,

what we currently have, to 329 within 5

years.

Where will the additional SM–3s

come from in the out years? If so, what

other programs are going to be

squeezed? How are they going to go

from 133 to 329 when they’re buying

less than what was proposed? Where’s

the big request for the additional ones?

The FY 2009 budget indicates three

additional THAAD batteries will be acquired;

yet the budget requests no

funds for additional THAAD radars.

According to the contractor, major

suppliers could go cold in FY 2010. So

for the administration to say, We’re

not against missile defense. We’re not

eliminating missile defense. We’re just

shifting focus. They’re not shifting

focus. They’re not even buying what

was planned.

Representative FRANKS, I know you

have been a big advocate for all of

these systems.

Thank you, Representative

FRANKS. I appreciate your comments

on that. It’s very important we

look at this through the lens of the administration’s

policies with respect to

Russia.

There is no historical perspective

where conceding to Russia early has

ever gained anything at the bargaining

table. When you concede to Russia

prior to entering into negotiations,

they say, What else am I going to get

when I get to the negotiating table?

They never say, Well, that was very

great of you, and I appreciate what you

have done. I’m now going to do something,

too.

In this instance, the President had

already signaled in a letter that allegedly

went out in the beginning of the

year that he was willing to look at conceding

on missile defense for Russia’s

help on Iran without any indication

whatsoever that Russia is willing to

help. In fact, as you have pointed out,

Representative FRANKS, they have done

the opposite. They have been active in

selling technology and providing technical

assistance to Iran.

But also, Iran has shown no indication

of their interest in being dissuaded,

and, in fact, the International

Atomic Energy Agency said, Time for

persuasion and time for dissuading is

over; that Iran is now declared by the

International Atomic Energy Agency

to have the capability to create a nuclear

weapon. That was announced the

very same day the President decides to

abandon the nuclear shield that we

should have had with our missile defense

shield, with the President moving

from what would have been a 2013 deployment

for a missile defense shield in

Europe to a 2020 protection.

So I appreciate your points with respect

to Russia. As we enter the

START negotiations, obviously we

have a significant amount of concern

as to what this administration is going

to be doing with respect to our strategic

assets, having already compromised

on our missile defense.

Representative FRANKS, thank you

for being with us and participating in

this.

Just to recap for a moment as to

where we are time-wise, the President

has put forth an alternative plan for

missile defense that he says is going to

be available for protection for the

United States for intercontinental ballistic

missiles by 2020. He scrapped the

plan that was intended to provide protection

for the United States from

ICBMs by 2013.

All the intelligence that we have to

date shows that Iran could have ICBM

capability by 2015. The International

Atomic Energy Agency says that Iran

already has nuclear capability. Let’s

put that into a calendar.

We would have had a system that

would have protected us by 2013. The

President has taken that off the table.

The intelligence agencies say that Iran

could have nuclear capability, coupled

with missile technology, that could

reach the United States by 2015. The

President says, That’s all right. We’ll

wait for another 5 years and have capability

to protect the United States by

2020.

That’s an unreasonable time period

to put the United States at threat with

this threat, and it’s one that we should

all be concerned about.

I have asked the President and the

Secretary of Defense to declassify this

report from the Institute for Defense

Analyses. It’s an unclassified excerpt,

executive summary, which I’m holding

here, of an independent assessment of

the proposed deployment of ballistic

missile defense systems in Europe that

said that, actually, the system that he

scrapped would have been the most

cost effective. It would have been a system

that would have provided 24-hour

coverage at the least amount of cost

and, by the calendar that we just have

discussed, would have been available as

early as 7 years earlier than the President’s

plan for protecting the United

States.

While the administration has dismantled

our capabilities in Europe, at

the same time they have cut missile

defense overall by $1.2 billion, lessening

our capabilities in some very important

systems, including diminishing,

by a third, our capabilities in

Alaska.

The administration has indicated

that they can use our Alaska ground-based

missile systems to protect the

United States if Iran should get capability

earlier than their system is

available in 2020, but to show their

commitment to that system, they’ve

cut it by a third. So we’re actually

going to have less capability there.

Now, in addition to the lessening capability

in Alaska, we are losing the

opportunity for what would have been

an integrated system. With THAAD

and Aegis and the European system

and Alaska, we would have had opportunities

for multiple shots if the

United States should have a threat

that is posed to us. And, as Representative

FRANKS indicated, this system,

once in place, would have acted as deterrent

to stop the advancement of

missile technology and hopefully say

to countries that the United States is

advancing the type of technology that

would provide us the important protection

that we need.

The impact of the President’s decision

on our European allies is one of

which many people have grave concern.

Both Poland and the Czech Republic

are very concerned that this administration

unilaterally made the decision

to abandon the missile defense shield

and to leave them having taken the

step of agreeing with the United

States, in the face of Russian opposition,

without a United States partner

there, without a system moving forward;

both of those countries having

made statements indicating their concern

of a continuing strong relationship

with the United States.

I know that we all remain concerned

about showing to our NATO allies that

we remain committed to a strong missile

defense for this country, strong deterrence

in the area of nuclear proliferation,

and this administration, by

taking this step backward, weakens,

overall, our capabilities and certainly

those relationships.

Representative BISHOP, I know one of

the areas that you spoke on at the

House Armed Services Committee as

we were moving forward with the National

Defense Authorization Act was

this overall cut to missile defense of

$1.2 billion. When we look at what it’s

doing to Alaska, it is lessening our capability.

The missile shield that was

there was intended to have 40 interceptors.

The administration has cut it to

30.

They’ve significantly diminished the

airborne laser. They have reduced the

other programs that they’ve indicated

that they’re going to rely on with

Aegis and THAAD, actually lessening

the amount of investment that was

projected in FY 2009.

I know you’re concerned about what

that cut represents, and so am I. Perhaps

you could speak for a moment on

that $1.2 billion cut that this House

and Senate and this administration is

advancing at a time that we know that

North Korea and Iran are getting increased

technology.

Thank you, Representative

BISHOP. I appreciate your tenacity

on this and your advocacy for national

defense.

To give a recap of the time frame

that we’re dealing with, this administration

scrapped a plan that would

have provided a missile defense capability

to the United States mainland

from Europe that would have been

available as early as 2013. All of our intelligence

agencies are indicating that

by 2015, Iran could have missile technology

to reach the United States.

That’s why we needed that missile defense

technology in 2013. They were

going to have ICBM capability by 2015.

The International Atomic Energy

Agency said just last week that Iran

already has the capability to produce a

nuclear weapon. So when we’re talking

about 2015, and they are going to have

the ICBM capability to reach the

United States, we are talking about a

missile perhaps with a nuclear warhead.

This administration scraps that

plan and, instead, proposes a plan that

will not be available until 2020.

So by all the information we have

right now, this administration’s action

has a 5-year gap that has developed in

the time period where the administration

is accepting the capability by Iran

without having the missile defense

technology to protect the United

States.

What else are we hearing from Iran?

Today there was an announcement

that Iran has a covert uranium enrichment

facility. This should come as no

surprise. This is a country that has

continued to seek missile technology,

nuclear technology and nuclear capability.

We understand that Tehran is

not just trying to do this for civilian

purposes, that it actually represents a

threat to the United States, and that’s

why people have been such advocates

to ensure that this country has the appropriate

missile defense technology to

protect the country.

So the administration responds and

says, It’s not just 2020. We have capability

in Alaska. That will be our

backup plan. We can use our missiles in

Alaska to protect the United States

from Iran.

The problem with that is that this

administration, through this House

just this year, cut Alaska’s missile defense

capabilities by a third. So we

would have had our AEGIS and THAAD

capability, we would have had our European

capability, and we would have

had our Alaska capability, perhaps for

multiple shots that could have occurred

in order to protect this country

from Iran’s quest for an ICBM with it,

as is now said by the IAEA, to have a

nuclear capability. Instead, this administration

says, We’re taking Europe off

the table. We are going to rely on what

we have, and we’re going to take our

Alaska capability and cut it by a third.

It puts our country at risk. It puts

our families at risk. The President

should reverse this decision and should

proceed with supporting our allies in

NATO, supporting the Czech Republic

and Poland, who have been there for

us, and put the system in place, protecting

the United States.

The President said that the system

that he is doing is more cost effective.

There is a classified report—I have an

unclassified version of it—an independent

assessment of the proposed deployment

of ballistic missile defense

system in Europe. This report says

that the most cost-effective plan was

the one that he just scrapped. I will

end with reading a letter that I sent to

Secretary Gates, requesting that he

make this independent assessment and

study available. We hope that he releases

it so we can have a robust debate

on that.