Well, I appreciate

the gentleman from Ohio for giving

me this opportunity.

I am pleased to be with the gentleman

from Ohio and with the gentleman

from Arizona, who will be

speaking, I believe, in just a moment.

They have really turned out to be experts

on our missile defense system, as

well as the gentleman from Missouri,

who clearly understands the technical

nature of what we can do both on the

sea as well as on the land.

I am deeply concerned about what we

have been talking about in this area. It

is very clear that this decision, based

on what will happen in Europe, has significant

long-term implications to our

relationship with those European allies.

The gentleman from Ohio and I

have been, on several occasions, meeting

with German officials as part of the

study group on Germany. Is there really

an opportunity, once this country

has reversed course this way, to expect

them to trust us in long-term decisions

and in long-term commitments?

I hate to say this, but the idea of our

developing a stronger bond with Europe

based on this decision, the idea

that the current Iranian regime will

become nice in its relationships with

the rest of the world—I mean I’m

sorry. My beloved Cubs, Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Parliamentarian, my Cubs have a

better chance of making it to the

World Series than the Iranians have of

becoming nice all of a sudden unilaterally,

or the fact that our European ties

will be built stronger because of this

particular decision.

If I could, I’ll expand this slightly

and take us a little bit afield because

this does deal with the impact to our

European defense; it does deal with the

impact of the defense of the eastern

coast, and it also deals with the impact

of the defense of this entire country.

We right now have 30 ground-based

missiles to defend the entire country,

and they’re all situated in Alaska—in

one spot.

We talked earlier with other administrations

about extending that to

other areas, which makes sense, about

growing that number, which makes

sense, about taking not just a ground-based

system but also a kinetic energy

interceptor system to try to spread out

our defense, which, to me, makes sense.

This administration, much of these

decisions being made under a unique

gag order by the Secretary of Defense,

simply took the process of halting our

growth so that, once our 30 missiles are

gone, there is no replacement. Halting

the kinetic intercept system, even

though we were ready for the first test-fire

and everything had run smoothly

up to that time, simply putting a stopwork

order and halting it. Halting the

increase in production of our ICBM defense

system. All at the same time.

I want to put out one other element

that has an impact, because I see these

people every day. Look, I grew up

watching ‘‘Bewitched.’’ If there’s one

thing I noticed from that TV show it’s

that Samantha wasn’t real. Nobody

can wiggle his nose and create a new

solution.

Once we decide to unilaterally stop

the production of these missiles, if at

some point in the future we decide

maybe we made a mistake, you don’t

easily and quickly fix that mistake because,

once the industrial base is gone

on these elements, you don’t bring it

back. You cannot simply turn the spigot

on and off and, all of a sudden, have

the engineers who know the problems

and who have worked through them,

come back to work for the government.

As one of the generals who was talking

to me off the record simply said,

Look, first of all, when the work base

is gone, it is gone, and we don’t bring

it back. Most significantly, the first

people who leave are the ones we really

want. It’s not the worst employees who

leave first; it’s the best employees who

leave our industrial base first. Those

are the ones we want.

If at some time we decide we were

wrong and we have got to fix this problem,

that there maybe is a greater

threat than we’re anticipating. It will

cost this government significantly

more to restart that work base. It’s not

just a matter of we’re throwing people

out of a job. It’s not just a matter of

boom-and-bust economies. It’s the fact

that we will have to spend more to

recreate what we already have if, indeed,

the threat is more significant.

Some people in the military currently

see that.

Well, we were

talking about cutting back on all of

these missile defense programs, not in

Europe, but also with our ground-based

kinetic energy to save $1.8 billion. If we

look at what we have been throwing

around for stimulus money, for other

types of programs, even Cash for

Clunkers, it kind of is very small in relationship

to the impact it is having on

research and development. What does

it actually cost to try to defend this

country?

I appreciate the historical context

some of you have been putting into it.

The fact that the decision in Europe

was announced 70 years to the day,

let’s face it, if you want to go to some

other irony, the time that Secretary

Gates was saying that he was going to

stop the production of more than 30

ground-based missiles in the KEI was

the exact same day the North Koreans

were shooting a missile that was

threatening Japan going over it.

He was holding a press conference,

reassuring the State of Hawaii that we

had enough missile defense system to

protect everybody on the date of their

second shot. I think one of the things

we need to do in America is quit holding

press conferences about our missile

defense and making decisions, because

something bad always happens on

those particular days.

But it is undisputable, the fact that

every program that is started has

glitches in them that have to be

worked out. That’s why you want an

experienced work base to try to be

there who have gone through that program,

who have worked through it,

who know what works and know what

doesn’t work so you don’t have to keep

reinventing the wheel. As you said,

even if we were going to save $1.8 billion

by not doing this, if at some point

we realize along the line that 30 missiles

is not enough to defend this entire

country, it is going to cost significantly

more than that to rebuild it.

We, for example, on the ICBM rocket

motor program wanted to keep a warm

line in the industrial base so that we

could churn out a minimum number of

missile motors so that we could refurbish

those ICBMs that we are going to

keep. Well, we didn’t put enough

money in the budget to do that.

What it meant was that there were

people who were laid off because the

private sector could not keep that

warm line functioning. Even though

the military knew they insisted they

were going to have to have a warm

line, what it meant in the long term

was instead of putting about $10 million

or $20 million in the line, they are

going to have to put four times that

much money to start the warm line

project again.

What I am trying to say is here—and

we are throwing around a lot of numbers,

let me try to make this easier—it

is cheaper for us in the long run to

keep an industrial base of experts so

that we can maintain what we have

and try to find the research and development

to improve what we have.

If we start and stop, it is expensive to

restart, to reboot that program. It does

not save us money in the long run.

It does not give us better defense in

the long run. It does not help with research,

and it doesn’t help people who

lose their jobs, gain their jobs and lose

their jobs and uproot their families

when we don’t benefit from it in the

long run.

I appreciate you bringing that particular

issue up.

Well, if sometimes

you put a spin on it to try and

allow talking not just necessarily

about the numbers that we’re throwing

out there but the human face of what

this means, about the individuals who

actually are working in these programs

to try and make this country more secure,

they’re the ones who are losing

their jobs, which is okay if there’s a

long-term purpose. But I think you actually

put it very well, brilliantly well,

in saying so simply that the decision in

Europe, instead of being prepared 2

years before the threat is viable, we’re

now going to change that to be prepared

5 years after the threat is viable.

That makes no sense.

In that term, saving a billion dollars

is not necessarily in the best interest

of this country. Not only do you hurt

individuals who are working in that

area, but you hurt the entire Nation,

who is depending upon their results to

provide us with some modicum of protection.

Not only does it not make much

sense to say, okay, we already have the

holes dug, we’re ready to put the missiles

in there, and now we stop, even

though all the parts are there; not only

does it not make sense to say even

though the missile is already at Vandenberg

Air Base in California, we

won’t go ahead and finish the test to

see if it would have worked or not or

how effective it would be; those are not

productive approaches. And it illustrates

that we, as a country, are now in

the position where we seem to be vacillating

with not a clear and precise idea

of where we want to be in the future

and what we will use to defend ourselves

in the future.

As the gentleman from Ohio correctly

said, even if your assumption is

we’ll take money and we’ll shift it to

some other place, to announce shortly

after that you’re going to flatline military

spending and still want to find $60

billion in some kind of savings within

the system doesn’t mean we’re actually

going to move forward in any particular

area. It puts us into a world

that is very, very dangerous.

In the 1930s, we decided to cut our

fighter plane program because we

wanted to save some money, and when

World War II broke out, we found that

our bombing runs were having over a 20

percent casualty rate, which was unconscionable.

We stopped our bombing

runs until we could build up the fighter

program to accompany them.

We no longer have that luxury of

time. We live in a world where we no

longer have the luxury of time, which

Abraham Lincoln understood was part

of the strategy you have in warfare. We

don’t have that anymore.

We must be prepared now, not to find

out we made structural and strategic

mistakes sometime down in the future

when we don’t have the ability to repair

that situation.