



October 2, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

In the wake of your recent decision on European missile defense, we write in the hope that you honor the deep and principled connections that have bound the United States and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe since the time of Woodrow Wilson. Mindful of these links, we are concerned about the impact that canceling the planned missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic will have on our relationship with these strategic allies, other countries in the region, and our global credibility.

The Polish and Czech installations were a proposed response to the threat from Iran's missile and nuclear programs. As you said in April in Prague, "Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile activity poses a real threat, not just to the United States, but to Iran's neighbors and our allies. The Czech Republic and Poland have been courageous in agreeing to host a defense against these missiles." Let us not ignore that courage amid debates about revised time tables, intelligence estimates, and technological feasibility.

We urge you to reiterate America's commitment to these allies that have endured Russian intimidation in support of the United States and a shared commitment to democracy. One way to do this is to move quickly to ensure that some of the land-based SM-3 missile defense sites your administration is proposing will be placed on Polish and Czech soil. Further, the United States should leave the door open to deploying Ground Based Interceptors should a long-range missile threat from Iran materialize sooner than you anticipate and alternative technologies not be available to defend against it. The planned deployment of a U.S. Patriot battery to Poland should proceed without delay, and similar arrangements should be explored with other allies in the region. We also encourage you to explore other ways to improve the U.S. defense relationship with both countries as well as their neighbors, including increased U.S. support for defense modernization efforts.

In July, a group of Central European leaders addressed to you, in an open letter, their concerns about the weakening state of U.S. relations with their region. "When it comes to Russia," they wrote, "our experience has been that a more determined and principled policy toward Moscow will not only strengthen the West's security but will ultimately lead Moscow to follow a more cooperative policy." Mr. President, our friends' advice is sound. Their wisdom has been earned

both under the thumb of Soviet rule and in the shadow of today's more assertive Kremlin.

Polish and Czech leaders supported U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan despite heavy criticism. Though the signatories of this bipartisan letter have varying views on the merits of your administration's proposed missile defense architecture for Europe, we are united in our concern about the effect that even the perception of U.S. disengagement from Central Europe could have on our allies in the region. Supporters of the United States should not have to gamble on the staying power - or the commitment - of American leadership. We urge you to make every effort to ensure that Moscow does not conclude that America retreats in the face of threats to its most loyal allies.

Continuing plans to build missile defense sites in both Poland and the Czech Republic would send a clear message about the depth and sincerity of America's engagement in this region that shares our values and is vital to our security. The Central European letter stated: "Many in the region are looking with hope to the Obama Administration to restore the Atlantic relationship as a moral compass for their domestic as well as foreign policies." Many in America are hoping the same. Rather than raising additional doubts about our commitment to European allies, we urge you to work assiduously to strengthen it.

Sincerely,

Elliott Abrams  
Max Boot  
Seth Cropsey  
Thomas Donnelly  
Jamie M. Fly  
Richard W. Graber  
Brian Green  
Jakub Grygiel  
Larry Hirsch  
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