



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 28, 2012

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I was alarmed to learn of the message you sent to incoming Russian President Vladimir Putin while in South Korea Monday.

America's missile defense program is critical to our homeland security and the collective security of our NATO partners, and it has clear implications for the security of our allies in the Middle East. I and other Members of the House have previously expressed concern about your administration's apparent willingness to make unilateral concessions to Russia that undermine our missile defense capabilities. Your comments reinforce those worries.

The Russian government has not lived up to its obligations to support the world community in reining in the rogue nations of Iran, Syria, and North Korea. On the contrary, Russia has at times offered support for these dangerous regimes. And it is increasingly evident that Russia is intent on expanding its boundaries and power through hostile acts – including invading a neighboring American ally. It is troubling that you would suggest to Russian leaders that their reckless ambition would be rewarded with greater “flexibility” on our missile defense program after the upcoming election. That has significant implications for the security of our homeland, sends a terrible signal to our allies around the world, and calls into question the effectiveness of your “reset” policy with the Russian government.

Your message also implies you understand such concessions would not be supported by the American people or the Congress. As you know, the House has passed legislation prohibiting the administration from making any agreements to diminish our missile defense capacity absent congressional authorization or treaty. This is an imperative upon which we continue to insist.

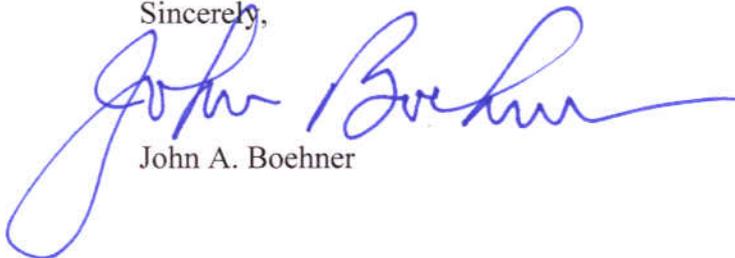
Your immediate clarification provided little clarity and instead sought to conflate the issue of missile defense – the focus of your words – with the separate matter of Russia's nuclear weapons program. I ask that you explain what greater “flexibility” on missile defense you were suggesting Mr. Putin could expect in a second term. With Congress' expressed interest in this matter and America's objective of preventing rogue states from launching missile strikes, it is important to know what changes you are contemplating or offering. Further, what actions does your administration believe the Russians have taken that warrant any change in our missile defense policy?

The President
September 2, 2011
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Given the specter you have raised of shifting positions, it would be appropriate that you state publicly and clearly that no unilateral concessions will be made to the Russians, before or after the election. Or, if your administration is planning any concessions to the Russians on missile defense, I request that you report on them and consult immediately with the congressional committees of jurisdiction. A misguided missile defense policy would have far-reaching consequences, and any concessions you may have under consideration require an open and thorough justification. A post-election surprise on this critical issue would not be welcomed by the American people, the Congress, or the world community.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John A. Boehner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the name.

John A. Boehner