CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON

7th District Pennsylvania

March 6, 1997

NEWS RELEASE

OPENING STATEMENT OF HONORABLE CURT WELDON

CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

HEARING ON MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAMS

March 6, 1997

This afternoon, the Military Research and Development Subcommittee meets to receive open testimony on the Administration's response to strategic and theater missile threats facing our forces around the world and the American people here at home. Although this hearing is not officially a joint hearing with the Procurement Subcommittee, I have invited my good friend Duncan Hunter and all my colleagues from the Procurement Subcommittee to join us as we address the FY 1998 BMD programs.

Just last month, thirty members of the R&D and the Procurement Subcommittees received extensive classified briefings from Central Intelligence Agency analysts regarding present and future threats from ballistic and cruise missile developments and proliferation. It was stressed by analysts, that while there is some uncertainty, the Intelligence Community is in essential agreement about the present and emerging strategic and theater missile threats.

In this regard, and I would venture to guess that my colleagues would agree with me on this, a single conclusion can be drawn from the information received — and that is, the threat posed by the proliferation of theater and strategic missile technology is real and growing.

1554 GARRETT ROAD, UPPER DARBY, PA 19082/ (610) 259-0700 • 30 SOUTH VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 212, PAOLI, PA 19301/ (610) 640-9064
2452 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515/ (202) 225-2011

Against this background, I would like to comment on this nation's missile defense capability as of today. According to the recent statement of the Secretary of Defense in response to a direct congressional inquiry, the United States does not have the ability to defend this nation against even one ballistic missile, nor does it have theater missile defenses capable of defending our forces against the numerous existing theater missile threats. That, ladies and gentlemen, is astounding – the most powerful nation on earth is defenseless. This very fact may well be providing a major motivation to countries around the world to pursue strategic and theater missile capability through the proliferation Arms Bazaar.

In 1983, then President Reagan directed the Secretary of Defense to assess the feasibility of developing a capability to defend the United States and its allies against the strategic missile threat. In response, the committee established by the Secretary concluded it was, in fact, technically feasible.

We cannot, as yet, defend ourselves against a single strategic missile launched at our country. Our men and women serving in the armed forces cannot defend themselves against today's threat, much less the increasingly sophisticated threat projected for the 2010-2015 time frame.

One of the key issues we plan to address here today is that, while there has been continuous activity to explore various national missile defense architectures, a system design concept has not yet been defined. In fact, we understand that the JROC has not yet validated an NMD operational requirement, even though you have documented threat assessment reports for both the national and theater missile threats, and have had them for some years.

The President's budget proposal for FY 1998 raises other questions. OSD press releases say that the Ballistic Missile Defense budget has been increased to $3.5 billion dollars. However, closer examination reveals that the FY1997 BMD program has actually been decreased, and other previously non-BMD programs are now being counted as part of BMD.

The Administration talks a good game when it comes to missile defense. Former Secretary Perry, for example, has stated, "We received a wake-up call with Saddam Hussein's use of Scud missiles during Operation Desert Storm and new information on his ambitious nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs. *The proliferation of these horrific weapons presents a grave and urgent risk to the United States and our citizens, allies, and troops abroad."*.

But talk is cheap.

In fact, Dr. Kaminski, I realized while listening to you at yesterday's TACAIR hearing, that during the past seven years since Operation Desert Storm, we have committed more than three times the development

funding for two aircraft programs than we have for all of the TMD programs. While you and General Ralston made such strong cases for the need for TACAIR modernization, it became more and more evident that when the Administration really wants a program, the necessary funding is committed. In the case of TMD, however, although you state that you have accelerated those programs, most all of the TMD programs have, in fact, been decreased from FY 1997 appropriated levels. Any plans to accelerate these programs must be included in those outyear budget increases discussed so thoroughly in yesterday's hearing, that never seem to materialize.

The Administration has been committed to other things besides TACAIR. For the last few years, DOD modernization budgets have been constantly cut to pay for the operating expenses to keep U.S. troops in Bosnia. While President Clinton has stated that he opposed a commitment to deploy a National Missile Defense capability, and cited cost as a factor, we have already billed DOD modernization budgets for over $5.8 billion to pay for Bosnia, with another $1.5 billion projected for FY 1998. According to our military leaders, this amount would have been more than enough to deploy an NMD capability by 2003.

Thus, we are here today to learn from the Administration how they are going to expeditiously provide this nation and its deployed forces adequate missile defenses.

Joining us today to provide their insights are :

Honorable Paul Kaminski
Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology
and
Lieutenant General Lester Lyles, USAF
Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Office

Mr. Secretary, we welcome you and thank you for being here. However, before I turn the floor over to you, I want to call upon Duncan Hunter, the Chairman of the Procurement Subcommittee, for any remarks he may have—followed by Mr. Pickett and Mr. Skelton, the ranking Democrats on the R&D and Procurement Subcommittees respectfully.

1554 GARRETT ROAD, UPPER DARBY, PA 19082/ (610) 259-0700 • 30 SOUTH VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 212, PAOLI, PA 19301/ (610) 640-9064
2452 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515/ (202) 225-2011