

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We are writing to express our strong support for your commitment to ensuring China is included in meaningful U.S. arms control efforts. The Chinese Communist Party is an irresponsible predatory actor that has spent many years working against America's interests. Even amid the global coronavirus crisis—which the CCP created with its lies and deception—the Chinese regime has put its aggressive nuclear ambitions on full display.

Just recently, a CCP state media editorial said that China should expand its nuclear arsenal to 1,000 warheads, which according to some estimates would mean tripling the regime's stockpile. The CCP was careful to note China's specific need for "at least 100" DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach the United States. This rhetoric underscores the need to cap China's arsenal at existing levels—at a maximum—through effective arms control.

The CCP's aggressiveness is nothing new. In April, the State Department raised concerns that China may not be conforming with the "zero-yield" standard under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Last May, Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley warned that China will likely at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile over the next decade. China, he said, is "implementing the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal" in its history.

Powered by the state-mandated fusion of its defense and civilian sectors, China, after many years of proclaiming its minimum nuclear deterrent, has developed its own nuclear triad to directly rival America. It continues to modernize its nuclear arsenal. It is also developing capabilities to evade U.S. missile defenses, including maneuverable reentry vehicles and hypersonic glide vehicles, and is topping some of its missiles with multiple independently targetable warheads. These advances, among others, do not signal a policy of restraint or lean force structure.

The United States must contain China's malign nuclear and conventional military ambitions. That includes fully funding efforts to increase U.S. readiness and lethality in the Indo-Pacific, continuing to develop advanced missile and missile defense capabilities, and modernizing all three legs of our nuclear triad. But, as you have rightfully said, Mr. President, it also means reining in China through effective arms control.

Your directive to bring China to the table has only grown in urgency since the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, a crisis for which the U.S. and its allies must hold China accountable. We must compel the CCP to be transparent about both this devastating virus and its nuclear capabilities and ambitions. As the Chinese regime continues to engage in pernicious behavior in the Indo-Pacific and around the world, we reiterate our support for your efforts to protect freedom and stability through meaningful arms control.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Cheney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Cheney
Member of Congress

The following Members of Congress have co-signed this letter:

Michael R. Turner
Roger Marshall, M.D.
Troy Balderson
Neal Dunn
Ted Budd
Rick Crawford
Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Vicky Hartzler
Jim Banks
Doug Lamborn
Michael Waltz
Mike Kelly
Paul Cook
Trent Kelly
Denver Riggleman
Scott R. Tipton
Rob Bishop

Jody B. Hice
Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Dan Crenshaw
Randy K. Weber
Debbie Lesko
Guy Reschenthaler
Bill Johnson
John Rutherford
Mike Gallagher
Steve Chabot
W. Gregory Steube
John Joyce M.D.
Doug Collins
Ron Wright
Lee Zeldin
Bryan Steil
William Timmons
Jack Bergman
Tom Rice
Richard Hudson
K. Michael Conaway
Peter T. King
David Schweikert

CC: Mr. Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State
Dr. Mark T. Esper, Secretary of Defense
Amb. Robert O'Brien, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs