

02/02/00 WED 14:00 FAX
JAMES P. MCGOVERN
340 DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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AVIATION

WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2103

January 13, 2000

416 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2103
(202) 225-8101

DISTRICT OFFICES:
34 MECHANIC STREET
FIRST FLOOR
WORCESTER, MA 01608
(508) 831-7356

1 PARK STREET
ATTLEBORO, MA 02723
(508) 431-8025

218 SOUTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 204
FALL RIVER, MA 02721
(508) 677-0140

<http://www.house.gov/mcgobern/>

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you about a matter of grave concern and one I hope you will raise forcefully in your State of the Union address on January 27, 2000. Given the new dangers of nuclear proliferation – best characterized by the India-Pakistan situation – and the Senate's failure to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it is more important than ever for the United States to declare before the world its strong and unambiguous commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is my hope and my request, Mr. President, that you make such a declaration part of your State of the Union address.

During your first term as President, you made significant achievements in decreasing the threats posed by nuclear weapons. You convinced three former Soviet states – Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine – to return the nuclear arsenals left behind when the Soviet Union collapsed and to renounce nuclear weapons by signing the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). You took the important step of extending the U.S. nuclear testing moratorium in 1993 and helped initiate international CTBT negotiations in 1994. In April 1995, you took the lead in securing international support for the indefinite extension of the NPT, and to win the support of non-nuclear states, you and other nuclear powers renewed your commitments to implement Article VI of the NPT and to conclude the CTBT.

During your second term, however, the Republican-led Congress has made further gains problematic. START II, negotiated by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin, has still not been implemented; START III negotiations have become stalled; the U.S. Senate cavalierly rejected ratification of the CTBT; and the U.S. and other four major nuclear powers continue to reject multilateral disarmament talks, despite increasing calls to do so by the international community, many U.S. allies, the New Agenda Coalition, and the United Nations.

The failure of the U.S. and other nuclear weapons states to make better progress toward disarmament and an end to nuclear weapons and testing gave Indian leaders a convenient (and self-serving) rationale to conduct nuclear tests in 1998 and to flirt with deployment of its nuclear weapons. With Pakistan responding in kind, the fighting between India and Pakistan in the disputed territory of Kashmir poses the risk of the use

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of nuclear weapons in a region that is home to one-sixth of the world's inhabitants. Further, lack of progress from major powers to decrease the threat of nuclear warfare encourages and provides a more open climate for rogue states, such as North Korea, to continue their own development of such weapons and delivery systems.

I know that you, Secretary of State Albright and Secretary of Defense Cohen have spent great effort in attempting to defuse regional conflicts that might escalate to nuclear confrontation. The single greatest contribution the U.S. can make, however, to controlling proliferation among younger nuclear powers and non-nuclear states is to take concrete steps, both unilateral and multilateral, to eliminate nuclear weapons during our lifetime.

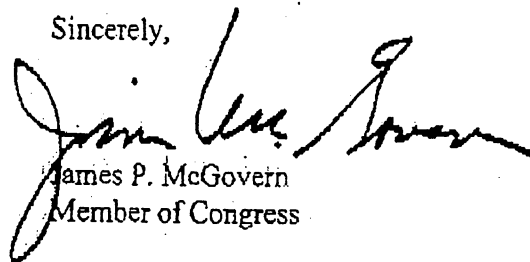
I urge you to declare - clearly, strongly, boldly - that the United States remains committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons. I share your commitment to reduce our nuclear arsenals and the threat of nuclear warfare in ways that do not leave the U.S. vulnerable to surprise attack. Within that context, there are concrete measures you might immediately announce, including but not be limited to:

- 1) shifting the majority of U.S. (and Russian) nuclear forces off hair-trigger alert;
- 2) having you, as President, invite the other four major nuclear powers to begin nuclear disarmament talks on a multistep nuclear weapons elimination process;
- 3) initiating START III negotiations with President Putin, even in the absence of the ratification of START II;
- 4) unilaterally reducing our nuclear stockpile and strategic nuclear weapons to the lowest levels allowable under law; and
- 5) committing the U.S. to work with the Russian government to ensure the ratification and implementation of START II by both countries this year.

Such an unequivocal declaration, buttressed by concrete measures aimed at defusing current global nuclear tensions, would be particularly meaningful now to your own legacy as an arms control president and to presenting a blueprint for peace to the 106th Congress and the next U.S. Administration.

I urge you, Mr. President, to take advantage of your State of the Union message to provide the world with the leadership it so desperately desires for the elimination of nuclear weapons in our lifetime.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

JPM:cb

cc: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright
Secretary of Defense William Cohen
National Security Advisor Samuel "Sandy" Berger

Consent Communication #7

305

A communication was received from
Congressman James McGovern,
transmitting a letter sent to President
Clinton relative to the commitment to
the elimination of nuclear weapons.

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In City Council February 8, 2000

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