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March 22, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

The Honorable Christine E. Wormuth
Secretary of the Army
United States Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0101

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Wormuth,

In light of the heightened energy needs of the Department of Defense (DoD) and growing threats from our adversaries, we write to urge DoD, and especially, the Department of the Army, to bolster the protection and resilience of our critical infrastructure. In particular, we encourage the Army to consider all energy supply sources, such as advanced civil nuclear technology, for critical mission demands and increased resilience for U.S. bases.

Our adversaries, namely the People's Republic of China and Russia, have recognized the criticality of civil nuclear energy. As a result, they are investing vast state resources in developing and deploying the next generation of nuclear reactors while actively pursuing long-term global contracts for nuclear energy.

It is critical that the United States lead in the development and deployment of advanced nuclear reactors to secure our own critical infrastructure with resilient, continuous power, especially for DoD mission critical operations in remote and austere environments. The United States must also ensure, alongside our partners and allies, that our adversaries do not monopolize control of nuclear fuel supply chains and new nuclear technologies such as small modular reactors (SMRs) – where contracts can span sixty to one hundred years – to exert undue geopolitical and economic influence, set nefarious global standards around nuclear technology, and control supply chains for critical sources of energy.

The Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) reflects substantial bipartisan support in Congress for advanced nuclear reactors. For example, the bill requires DoD to consider advanced civil nuclear technologies for certain facilities, including in Guam. The NDAA also provides support for DoD's Project Pele, which is intended to design, build, and demonstrate a mobile nuclear microreactor on a military installation. Critically, the bill includes bipartisan legislation intended to secure a reliable domestic nuclear fuel supply chain for today's nuclear reactors and advanced reactors.

We encourage DoD, and the Army, to fulfill Congressional intent to explore deployment of secure, continuous, reliable power to critical infrastructure and mission critical operations. We request the Army to brief our staff on future deployment plans, including the Army's pilot microreactor program, and the Army's plans for expeditiously deploying SMRs to power larger installations and facilities. DoD and the Army will be important leaders in the coming decades in ensuring the energy security of the U.S. and our ability to outcompete our adversaries in advanced technology domains that underpin the U.S. defense enterprise.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
Chairman



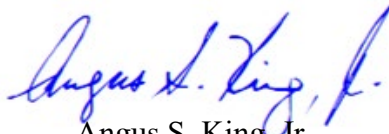
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