

December 7, 2011

President Barack Obama

The White House

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, we support Michael McFaul's nomination to be our next Ambassador to Russia. Recently, in considering this nomination, Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois requested written assurances that the Administration will not provide Russia any access to America's classified missile defense data and technology. We urge you to promptly and fully engage with Senator Kirk's office on this important matter.

We share Sen. Kirk's concerns. On November 23, 2011, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced that if the United States moves forward with missile defense plans in Europe, Russia will deploy strike systems in the west and south of its country, including Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region, to target U.S. missile defense installations. Such an announcement, combined with Russian opposition to sanctions against Syria and Iran, the reported delivery of Russian missiles to the Assad dictatorship and Russian plans to discuss missile defense with Iran and China, demonstrate the difficulties in our current relationship with Russia.

Under present circumstances, it would seem unwise to share any classified missile defense data with Russia. This is a widely shared view in Congress. As you know, in April, 39 Senators requested written assurances that the United States would deny Russia any access to America's classified missile defense data and technology. In May, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved language in the National Defense Authorization Act to prohibit such access.

Time is short if Dr. McFaul is to be in Moscow before the New Year. In the aftermath of the deeply flawed Duma election, it is imperative to have Dr. McFaul's voice heard in Russia as soon as possible. We urge you to work with Senator Kirk's office in order both to protect our national security and to expedite Ambassador-Designate McFaul's confirmation.

Sincerely,

Eric Edelman
Jamie Fly
Bruce Jackson

Robert Kagan
David Kramer
David Merkel
Steve Rademaker
Randy Scheunemann