

Mr. Chairman, in an age of sophisticated missile development and rampant nuclear proliferation, the United States must continue to invest its attention and resources in developing and fielding defenses to stay ahead of the ominous threat of ballistic missiles.

It is critical that the United States continue to work with our friends and allies who wish to cooperate in our mission to develop a robust ballistic missile defense against our common enemies.

The United States is currently working with NATO and negotiating with European countries about the possibility of placing a ballistic missile interceptor site in Europe. This is an example of a missile defense opportunity that could offer protection for the U.S. homeland and our European friends from a perilous threat that we share, ballistic missiles potentially carrying nuclear warheads, being launched from rogue nations such as Iran.

Mr. Chairman, incidentally, Iran is projected to have missiles capable of reaching the United States homeland within 7 years.

As it currently stands, this bill prohibits funds made available under the NATO Security Investment Program from being obligated or expended to conduct studies on missile defense. My amendment would strike this section. Mr. Chairman, in the midst of the current debate regarding the need for greater international support of missile defense, we must not arbitrarily prevent our allies from joining with us to pursue these vital and common goals.

For the sake of defending our cities and our freedom, I encourage our colleagues to support our Nation's policy to build a robust, layered ballistic missile defense; to support our allies against common threats; and to support this amendment.