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NATIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Tierney Statement on President Obama's Missile Defense Announcement

Washington, D.C. – Rep. John F. Tierney (D-Mass.), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, issued the following statement about the President's decision to abandon pursuit of a European missile shield:

"I applaud the President's decision to change plans for missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic from targeting threats that do not yet exist to the threats our Intelligence community currently assesses as more likely concerns at this time. Further, we will now be seeking to deploy missiles that are further along in development and more likely to work instead of moving prematurely with missiles not realistically tested and assessed by experts to be incapable of meeting anticipated defenses. The Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System, and specifically its capabilities to counter intercontinental ballistic missiles, has been a concern of mine and others for a long time. The program has not demonstrated success domestically and it has been a source of unnecessary friction in our relationship with Europe and with Russia.

It is my belief that the U.S. taxpayer has been misguided about the actual capabilities of the GMD element of missile defense. Time and again we have heard from independent experts that the technology for this kind of defensive system does not match up with the "rhetoric of success" we hear from the program's proponents. Time and again, I have urged my colleagues

in Congress to heed this advice and make appropriate adjustments to the missile defense program. The President's plan will place defenses geographically closer to Iran, will be deployed much sooner than the previously selected systems, and will be more cost effective."

By planning on deploying the Aegis ship with SM3 interceptors in 2011, upgrading that with land-based systems in 2015, and moving to larger, longer capacity around 2018 our military is supporting a much more realistic alternative. While we continue to test and attempt to perfect defenses, we should at least be committed to implementing plans with a reasonable prospect for success against threats that may in fact exist instead of pursuing some ideological and unproven path."

Chairman Tierney's subcommittee has conducted extensive oversight of missile defense programs, including a comprehensive three-day hearing last year.