

Investing in Cures Before Missiles (“ICBM Act”)

Senator Edward J. Markey and Representative Ro Khanna

The Challenge:

- The United States should devote resources to develop a universal coronavirus vaccine to save lives before investing in a new, lethal, and unneeded intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), known as the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD).
- The GBSD program is likely to cost much more than publicly projected. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined in [a July 2020 report](#) that unless the entire nuclear modernization program is scaled back, the program will exceed the [\\$1.2 trillion cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office \(CBO\)](#) (\$1.7 trillion adjusted for inflation).
- Experts doubt the need for an ICBM replacement. In 2017, CBO [estimated](#) that the current Minuteman III could be safely maintained and updated for \$37 billion less than the GBSD program is slated to cost just to develop and deploy.
- COVID-19 has killed more than 2 million people worldwide and 500,000 Americans. Variant strains of the virus have emerged, [threatening the effectiveness of current vaccines](#). After battling three novel deadly coronaviruses in the past two decades — SARS, MERS, and SARS-CoV-2 — we should redirect taxpayer dollars to develop a *Vaccine of Mass Prevention* before we spend that money on a new land-based *Weapon of Mass Destruction*.

Bill Details:

- First, the **ICBM Act** calls for a life extension of the Minuteman III and for the redirection of the unobligated balances of appropriations at the Department of Defense for the research, development, testing, and evaluation of the GBSD program to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to conduct or support research for the development of a universal coronavirus vaccine.
- Second, the bill calls for the transfer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to research and combat emerging and zoonotic infectious diseases of all unobligated balances of appropriations made available for the National Nuclear Security Administration for the W87-1 warhead modification program.
- Third, the bill prohibits funds authorized for fiscal year 2022 from being obligated or expended for the GBSD program or the W87-1 warhead modification program.
- Finally, the bill calls for an independent study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences on practical options to prolong the life of the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile to 2050, including consideration of force structure changes and non-destructive testing of missiles.

Endorsing Groups/Individuals:

- Former Secretary of Defense (1994-1997), Bill Perry; The Ploughshares Fund; Union of Concerned Scientists; Arms Control Association; Council for a Livable World; Peace Action; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Win Without War; Physicians for Social Responsibility; Center for International Policy; Beyond the Bomb; and Global Zero (*as of 3/23/2021*)