

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 5, 2022

Admiral Charles Richard
United States Strategic Command
900 SAC BLVD
Offutt Air Force Base, NE 68113-6020

Dear Admiral Richard:

We are in receipt of your classified notification made pursuant to Section 1648 of Public Law 117-81, and thank you for your prompt determination and communication. However, as you are aware, this statutory requirement mandates that Congress be provided an unclassified and a classified notification when the Commander of United States Strategic Command determines,

“that the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles in the active inventory of China exceeds the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles in the active inventory of the United States,

the number of nuclear warheads equipped on such missiles of China exceeds the number of nuclear warheads equipped on such missiles of the United States, or

the number of intercontinental ballistic missile launchers in China exceeds the number of intercontinental ballistic missile launchers in the United States.”

While we appreciate your timely submission of the classified Section 1648 notification, the statute explicitly requires an unclassified determination, which was not provided. We therefore do not consider the requirement under PL 117-81 to be satisfied and encourage both you and your successor to work with relevant departments and agencies to fulfill the requirement.

Finally, we wish to take this opportunity to recognize your upcoming retirement from active duty and thank you for your decades of service to our nation. We have found your advice and counsel, particularly as Commander of USSTRATCOM, invaluable at this critical time, and we hope others follow your example and demonstrate the same refreshing candor. The country is stronger because of the efforts and sacrifices of both you and your family.

Sincerely,



Senator James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee



Congressman Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee



Senator Deb Fischer
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Senate Armed Services Committee



Congressman Doug Lamborn
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
House Armed Services Committee

Cc:
Lloyd J. Austin
Secretary of Defense

General Mark A. Milley
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff