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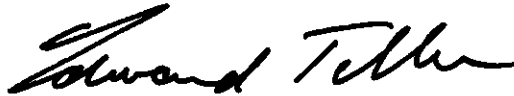
June 27, 1974

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Room 4E660, Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C. 20350

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

In spite of good intentions, the letters to McClellan and Mahon were sent out a little late. I hope they will arrive in sufficient time, and I particularly hope that they will do some good.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Edward Teller".

Edward Teller

ET/jh/em

June 27, 1974

The Honorable George H. Mahon, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

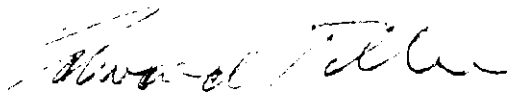
I understand that the budget of the United States Navy will be discussed in your committee in the near future. In the various ways in which I have been connected with national security, I have become convinced that our military strength is no longer equal to that of the Russians and that in the foreseeable future the advantage of the Russians may become decisive. If my evaluation is correct, the consequences will, of course, be terrible.

Among the various arms of defense the navy has a particular importance. Due to our original massive leadership on the oceans, the navy was the last to lose its predominance. It is also of unique importance in maintaining the freedom of the seas and in making it possible for us to have any meaningful alliance outside the western hemisphere.

It would be a tragic mistake to cut the naval budget. In fact, I hope that a detailed analysis (which I, unfortunately, cannot attempt in a short letter) will show that the naval budget as it stands now is not quite enough to stop the ongoing change in the balance of forces that continues to favor the Russians.

Hoping that this letter will be of some assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,



Edward Teller

ET/jh/em

June 28, 1974

The Honorable John L. McClellan,
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
3241 New Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your help in connection with the new energy program. The item you saved may well pay back in hundredfold value to the United States.

I am now writing to you for an additional reason affecting much larger sums of money, but having also an even greater importance. I would like to make a general comment on the amount of money we are to spend on our navy's surface fleet.

I believe that Admiral Zumwalt was tragically right when he described the deterioration of our naval strength as compared to that of the Russians. I was sorry to see that the Secretary of Defense did not support his statement as fully as it should have been supported.

Russia has outstripped us in almost every field that has a military importance (I believe the only exception is our continuing superiority in electronic equipment). In particular the Russian submarine fleet appears both impressive and dangerous.

Our naval strength held out longer because we originally had a far greater superiority and because our geographic location is in some respects favorable. Now in this field we see that the Russians are at least as strong as ourselves and that if the present trend does not change, in a few years the Russians will have a dominating lead.

We are increasingly dependent on our interrelations with the rest of the world; and, therefore, the freedom of the oceans is more important to us than it ever was in history. Yet, we are facing a danger far greater than was the case in the early history of the United States when an unfriendly British fleet controlled the oceans.

During my various interactions with matters of national security, I became convinced that our military strength is eroding. Now this process of erosion has reached the last and most important element of our national defense, the navy, without which no other arm of our defense can be effective and which is desperately needed for a continued guarantee against a blockade incomparably more dangerous than the recent oil embargo. In a nuclear war strategic missiles are most important. In every other situation the navy is apt to play the decisive role.

The Honorable John L. McClellan
June 27, 1974
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It is not possible in a short letter to attempt an outline of the detailed measures that ought to be taken to remedy the situation. However, for reasons given above, I hope that in the forthcoming hearings the navy will not be criticized for spending too much, but rather that it may be questioned why more effective measures are not taken to stop the present dangerous trend. I am certain that this trend cannot be stopped without the expenditure of more money.

I have every confidence that your understanding and your leadership will help to salvage the situation which has deteriorated much too far.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Teller

ET/jh/em

10 July 1974

Dear Dr. Teller,

Thank you for your thoughtfulness in providing me copies of your letters to Chairman McClellan and Mahon regarding the relationship which the Navy budget bears to the deterioration of our military posture vis-a-vis the Soviets. I can only hope that such authoritative, cogent arguments will have positive effect before the passage of too much more time.

Although now retired from active naval service I look forward to continued effort to support our national security, and in the process our future association.

You have my best wishes.

Warm regards,

E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.

Dr. Edward Teller

Teller, E.