



CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY

28 April 2017

Hon. Roy Blunt
Chairman,
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Tom Coles
Chairman,
House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Blunt and Cole:

I write as the sponsor of the Secure the Grid Coalition – a team of national security practitioners and other experts knowledgeable about the vulnerability of our electric grid whose Honorary Co-Chairmen are former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Clinton Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey – to call your attention to an example of journalistic malfeasance by National Public Radio that seriously disserves the American people. Insult is added to injury by the fact that, as you are well aware, NPR is substantially underwritten by the hard-earned tax dollars of our countrymen and women.

On April 27th, NPR's "Morning Edition" program gave prominent treatment to [an interview](#) conducted by the network's Science Editor, Geoff Brumfiel. It followed up on [a report](#) aired the previous day with Mr. Woolsey in which he quite properly warned of North Korea's potential to destroy our electric grid with a satellite-based electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack. As you both received classified presentations this week about the grave danger posed by the Kim Jong-Un regime, I am sure you would be as concerned as we are about taxpayer-subsidized efforts to low-ball the North Korean threat.

Unfortunately, in this case, National Public Radio not only misled the public about the extensive scientific evidence that the U.S. electric grid – which is currently unprotected against EMP (and, for that matter, other hazards like sabotage, cyber warfare and intense solar storms) – is at risk of catastrophic failure if subjected to an EMP strike. Instead of even noting, for example, the decade-and-a-half of research and reporting on this risk by the Congressional EMP Commission, NPR instead relied exclusively upon Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, an arms control activist lacking scientific credentials who has made a career of dismissing *the hard science* that confirms

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our vulnerability to enemy-induced and naturally occurring electromagnetic pulses. The interview began with seven seconds of Lewis laughing hysterically at the question of whether such an attack would devastate our grid and all that depends upon it – which is virtually everything and everybody in 21st Century America.

NPR is, of course, free to misrepresent the truth and otherwise disinform its audience. Regrettably, it frequently does so. What is of great concern, however, is that – as with yesterday's report – such propagandizing and deceiving of its listeners is being subsidized by our tax dollars. I would respectfully suggest that such professional misconduct should not be rewarded, let alone enabled, by continued federal largesse.

At a minimum, I hope that your subcommittees would hold National Public Radio accountable for dereliction of its public trust by insisting that, going forward, it rigorously and objectively report on one of the most important public policy issues of our time: the *actual* vulnerability of our electric grid and society and the distinct possibility that enemies like North Korea might seek to exploit it with catastrophic consequences for our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Gaffney, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.
President and CEO