

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 2011

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Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Max Baucus
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Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator John Kerry
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Senator Jon Kyl
730 Hart Senate Building
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Senator Rob Portman
338 Russell Senate Office Building
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Senator Pat Toomey
502 Hart Senate Office Building
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Representative Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair
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Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Xavier Becerra
1226 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Dave Camp
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative James Clyburn
2135 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Fred Upton
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Chris Van Hollen
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction:

As you proceed with the important deliberations on how to reduce our nation's deficit, we would like to suggest one area of spending within the Department of Defense that we believe can be significantly reduced and will have minimal negative impacts to our nation's readiness or ability to efficiently respond to emerging threats. We firmly believe that our nation should proceed with significantly reducing the planned level of spending on overseas military construction projects, given that the Department of Defense has yet to provide Congress with essential comprehensive cost information associated with our force posture.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has concluded numerous times that the Department of Defense (DOD) often lacks critical information when assessing posture requirements in Europe, South Korea, and Guam. This results in the Department being limited in its ability to appropriately analyze the costs and strategic benefits of these requirements, further resulting in unnecessary and redundant overseas military construction requests.

Europe

For example, a report issued by GAO on February 3rd, 2011 studied the need to assess military posture in Europe and found that the DOD posture planning guidance does not require European Command to include comprehensive cost data in its theater posture plan. This means that it is difficult to determine what the true projected cost will be to support the installations, which GAO analysis determined was \$13 billion from 2006-2009. Although this critical information is lacking, DOD is still planning on spending more than \$423 million in new construction in Germany alone from Fiscal Years 2013-2016.

South Korea

The GAO studied the force posture that has been proposed in South Korea and again determined that critical comprehensive cost information was lacking in the Department's proposal to grow the DOD presence in the region from 28,500 to 84,000 personnel, which includes dependents. The total cost estimate for this proposal will be approximately \$17.6 billion through 2020, however these estimates are not complete and it is likely to be even higher. Even with significant cost information lacking, the Department of Defense still plans on spending nearly \$200 million from Fiscal Years 2013-2016 for new military construction.

Guam

In the US Territory of Guam, DOD has yet to finalize its master plan for the military buildup that will cost U.S. taxpayers nearly \$7.5 billion in military construction funding from Fiscal Years 2009-2016. GAO determined in a June 27, 2011 report that "Delays in finalizing the master plan may lead DOD to make budget requests for military construction projects for the relocation of the Marines from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam without reasonable assurances that the funds are needed in the time frame in which they are being requested." We believe that in these difficult financial times, taxpayers deserve to have those assurances, and funding should be put on hold or significantly reduced until those assurances are provided.

In the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the Department of Defense envisioned the need to reduce our overseas basing footprint, and laid out plans to "shift the large, permanent overseas garrisons toward expeditionary operations utilizing more austere bases abroad." The 2006 QDR also lists the following as justification to reduce our overseas presence;

Future joint forces will increasingly use host-nation facilities with only a modest supporting U.S. presence, decreasing the need for traditional overseas main operating bases with large infrastructures and reducing exposure to asymmetric threats. The effective combination of sea basing, enhanced long-range strike, reach-back, and surge and capabilities will reduce the forward footprint of the joint force.

In response to this strategy, and the recommendations of the Overseas Basing Commission, Congress provided \$14 billion for military construction at key training installations across the United States to enhance the readiness and capabilities of our forces. However, this strategy was significantly altered in the 2010 QDR which recommended a change in strategy from force projection to one that seeks to focus more on "Building Partnership Capacity" overseas. We are concerned that new investments requested to support this strategy are duplicative to

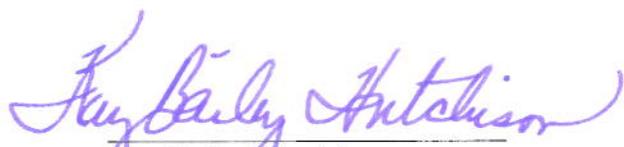
infrastructure that exists within the United States, and will require a higher level of investment to operate and maintain. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has determined that it is significantly higher to maintain facilities overseas, particularly in Europe, than it is in the United States. Further, in some cases, the building in U.S. bases to accommodate returning brigades will be empty and wasted.

We support our NATO allies but believe the “Building Partnership Capacity” strategy will continue to promote an over reliance by our NATO partners on the U.S. taxpayer who disproportionately foot the bill for defense spending. Of the 28 NATO allies, only 5 exceed the agreed upon 2% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spending on defense. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said, “The blunt reality is that there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the U.S. Congress – and in the American body politic writ large – to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense.”

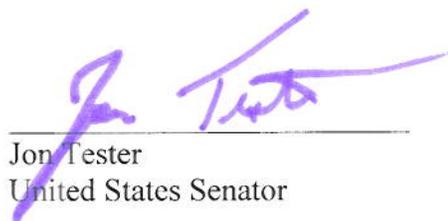
We concur with this assessment and believe that now is the time to take advantage of the significant investments that have been made in the military bases within the United States. We believe that significant savings can be achieved by dramatically reducing our overseas military presence, halting associated overseas military construction and returning those forces to installations with adequate existing infrastructure in place in the United States.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

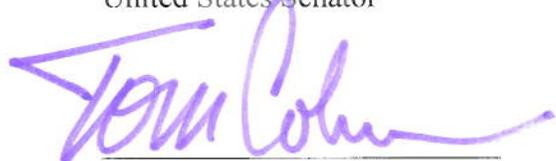
Sincerely,



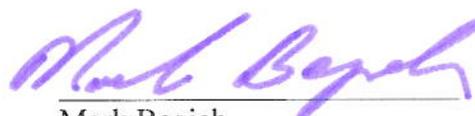
Kay Bailey Hutchison
United States Senator



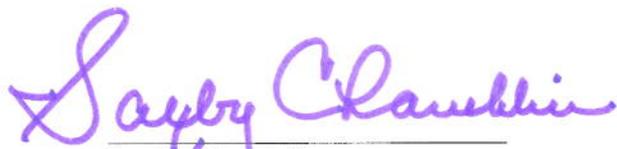
Jon Tester
United States Senator



Dr. Tom Coburn
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator