



Statement of
Governor Terry Branstad
Before the
House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Readiness
U.S. House of Representatives

**“Department of the Air Force aircraft force structure reductions
proposed in the 2013 President's budget request”**

July 12, 2012

Chairman Forbes, Ranking Member Bordallo, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, my name is Terry Branstad, Governor of the State of Iowa. I appear before you today on behalf of the National Governors Association, or NGA, and as Co-Chair of the Council of Governors, or Council. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the U.S. Air Force's Fiscal Year 2013 budget request and its disproportionate impact on the Air National Guard.

I would like to begin by thanking this Committee for its leadership and support of the Air National Guard. Thanks to your work and that of the Senate Committee, our Air National Guard will continue to have access to the personnel, aircraft and resources necessary to fulfill its dual-mission at home and abroad during Fiscal Year 2013. With your continued support, governors are working with the Department of Defense (DoD) to find solutions to the challenges facing our nation's military forces. I am hopeful we can find ways to fully leverage the operational strengths and cost savings of the Air and Army National Guard, as we move forward.

Overview

Governors care deeply about their dual responsibilities to support both the federal missions and homeland security requirements that our National Guard soldiers and airmen help fulfill every day. For my own State, we have been deploying airmen overseas since the mid-1990s in support of the No-fly missions and peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, Sinai Peninsula, and Kuwait. Since 9/11, more than 17,000 Iowa National Guard soldiers and airmen have served on active duty in support of the nation's efforts overseas. As a Governor, I truly understand the deep connection between my colleagues and those who serve their state and nation. I also take seriously the responsibilities I have to our returning veterans and to the families whose loved ones have made the ultimate sacrifice for this nation. In Iowa, we have lost 78 servicemembers in the War on Terror.

The National Guard has effectively balanced both mission sets at the same time. Just this last year, the Iowa National Guard deployed the 2nd Brigade Combat Team to Afghanistan in a full-spectrum mission set, making it the largest deployment of Iowa National Guard soldiers and airmen since World War II. At the same time, we were also responding to the historic Missouri River floods with approximately 1,000 National Guard servicemembers, making this the longest duration emergency response operation in our State's history.

As commanders-in-chief, governors take very seriously the duties and responsibilities placed on the men and women of the National Guard. We appreciate the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military to meet new threats and economic realities. We also understand the need for cost-effective means to achieve these goals. Governors across the country have made tough choices, but done so in a thoughtful way to leverage the most cost-effective resources available. In the State of Iowa, we continually look for innovative ways to deliver services and have sought ways to better leverage private sector strengths through public-private partnerships. I know that many Iowans at entities like Alcoa, Rockwell Collins, and the Rock Island Arsenal stand ready to help the Pentagon get the most out of their resources.

The Guard is a cost-effective operational force that is critical to our national security and our ability to respond to domestic emergencies. The Air National Guard provides 35 percent of the U.S. Air Force's capability for six percent of the budget.

Therefore, when the Air Force proposed to impose 59 percent of the total aircraft budget reductions and about six times the personnel reductions on the Air National Guard, nearly every governor signed a letter to Defense Secretary Panetta strongly opposing the Air Force's budget proposal (letter attached).

Governors' Concerns with FY2013 Air Force Budget

The Council is a presidentially-appointed bipartisan group of 10 governors and senior federal officials including the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security and White House officials. The Council provided an opportunity to discuss governors' concerns with Secretary Panetta, Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz on February 27.

At that time, I – along with my Council co-chair, Governor Chris Gregoire of Washington – relayed governors' frustration and dismay at having to read about the proposed cuts to the Air National Guard in the newspaper.

While we do not expect to be involved in the day-to-day operational decisions of DoD, we were disappointed by the lack of communication with us on such an important decision impacting the Air National Guard. We were also concerned by the dramatic nature of the proposal and its failure to recognize the role and importance of the Air National Guard in our states and the experience and cost effectiveness that the Air National Guard provides to the Total force.

Governors routinely rely on the National Guard to respond to emergencies. The National Guard has highly trained and readily accessible personnel and equipment that provide critical capabilities such as transportation, communications and medical response. The proposed reductions to the ANG would have stripped states of these capabilities and upended years of carefully crafted emergency response plans. I am now in my 18th year as governor and the Iowa National Guard has always performed to the highest of standards in the toughest of conditions.

During the Council meeting on February 27, Secretary Panetta indicated that he understood our concerns and agreed to work with us to try to find a solution.

Following that meeting, my Adjutant General, or TAG, Major General Timothy Orr, as well as Governor Gregoire's TAG, Major General Timothy Lowenberg, engaged in discussions with the Air Force to try to identify a better solution for FY2013.

While there were several discussions in early- to mid-March, significant differences remained with respect to manpower reductions, fighter aircraft and airlift needs.

On March 19, Governor Gregoire and I spoke with Secretary Donley and General Schwartz regarding insufficient progress to address governors' concerns. By letter on that same day, we encouraged them to consider cost neutral options for cross-leveling or reallocating programmed aircraft operations from the active service to the Guard (letter attached).

Unfortunately, despite our outreach to the Air Force leadership and Deputy Defense Secretary Carter (letter attached), the negotiations did not resolve key differences.

On April 23, Secretary Panetta shared a letter with us that he had sent to Congress (attached) in which he proposed to transfer 24 C-130 units from the active service to the Air National Guard. While we appreciate the Secretary's recognition of governors' need for greater airlift capacity, the proposal was previously presented by the Air Force and fell short of addressing our concerns. As we had discussed

with Secretary Donley and General Schwartz, this proposal failed to leverage the Guard's cost effectiveness to retain additional manpower, expertise, and fighter aircraft at a reduced cost to taxpayers.

Future Years' Budget Proposals

Thankfully, this Committee, as well as the Senate Armed Services Committee, has put forward legislation to preserve Air National Guard manpower and aircraft at current levels for another year. This temporary freeze will provide opportunities to exchange views, information and advice on state and DoD requirements for future fiscal years.

The Council is working on principles and appropriate coordination points for an open channel of communications between states and DoD on matters impacting the National Guard and its dual missions at home and abroad.

One item we have identified that contributed to this year's challenges was the Air Force's requirement that National Guard Bureau officials sign non-disclosure agreements on the budget process. Such a requirement creates an unnecessarily restrictive process that fails to adequately incorporate critical information from states.

The National Guard Bureau is statutorily required to serve as the channel of communications between states and the President and Secretary of Defense. Unnecessarily restricting the ability to share discreet but critical information with governors and their TAGs limits the flow of information and has resulted in disagreements that could have been largely avoided.

This is just one item we hope to discuss with DoD during the upcoming Council meeting this weekend.

As you know, the FY2014 budget proposals for the Air Force and the Army have already been developed and will soon be sent to the Secretary for his review. Without quick action to ensure communications with states, we may be faced with similar budget disagreements next year.

We are hopeful that the ongoing focus by Congress and the Senate Committee's proposed National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force will encourage DoD, the Air Force and the Army to work with us as quickly as possible to establish a better, more collaborative process for the FY2014 and FY2015 budgets.

On behalf of the nation's governors, I thank you for your strong support of our National Guard. Your continued assistance and support will be helpful as governors work with DoD to craft solutions to the problems we share.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Attachments:

- NGA letter from 49 governors to Secretary Panetta (February 28)
- Council letter to Air Force leadership (March 19)
- Council letter to Deputy Secretary Carter (March 29)
- Letter from Secretary Panetta to the Council (April 23)



Dave Heineman
Governor of Nebraska
Chair

Jack Markell
Governor of Delaware
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen
Executive Director

February 26, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

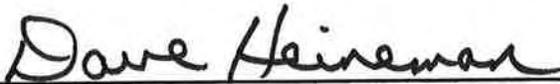
We, the nation's governors, strongly oppose the disproportionate cuts facing the Air National Guard as part of the U.S. Air Force's fiscal 2013 budget request.

Over the past decade our National Guard has evolved into a cost-effective operational force that is critical to our national security and our ability to respond to domestic emergencies. The Air Guard provides 35 percent of the U.S. Air Force's capability for six percent of the budget. It performs a variety of domestic missions, including transporting vital personnel, equipment and supplies during emergencies and assisting in daily drug interdiction operations.

As Commanders-in-Chief, we appreciate the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military to meet new threats and economic realities. We also understand the need for cost-effective means to achieve these goals. Given these realities, we must oppose the proposal that the Air National Guard absorb 59 percent of the total aircraft budget reductions and approximately six times the per capita personnel reductions.

Governors are extremely proud of the role that the National Guard plays in protecting this nation and its citizens. The National Guard is a highly experienced and capable force and an essential state partner in responding to domestic disasters and emergencies. We respectfully request that the Department of Defense reconsider any proposed Air Guard force or equipment reductions and that you work with governors to fashion solutions that best serve the interests of this nation.

Sincerely,





Edmund Brown of Fair Haven, Vt.

Samuel Herbert M. Beebe

John

Robert Bentley

Mary Fallon

Robert Hall

John H. H. Coe

Sam J. H. H. H.

Paul R. H. H. H.

C. I. Clifton

John Malley Mark Dayton

Blignard Jack Daly

William John

Carl Ray Tomlin

James H. Brown Chris Greig

W. E. Daniels, Jr. Tony Brant

Donald

Tom Platt

Dennis Daynard

John Kelly

Pat Quinn

George

Neil Abernethy

Ben Parker

John

Bob

John

Marlene

Rock Snyder

Devon Smith

Dee Hunt

Nathan Deal

W. P.

Ben Schmitt

John Roberts

Brian Harlan

Phil Bryant

John H. Johnson

Sean Powell



March 19, 2012

The Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary
U.S. Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

General Norton Schwartz
Chief of Staff
U.S. Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Donley and General Schwartz:

Thank you for your call this afternoon to discuss the Air Force's latest proposal to modify the Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal. Like you, we remain hopeful that a better process can be developed for future proposals affecting the National Guard, because we continue to have significant concerns regarding the ongoing use of the Air National Guard (ANG) as the bill-payer to protect the active component. Specifically, the Air Force's budget proposal fails to consider the ANG's cost-effectiveness, high level of experience, and homeland defense and emergency response missions.

Following the Council of Governors meeting on February 27, through key Adjutants General, we proposed a comprehensive alternative that would decrease operational risk by increasing surge capacity, preserve the experience and technical expertise of the ANG at a greatly reduced life-cycle cost, and exceed targeted savings. Our alternative would ensure a more balanced approach to reductions between the active forces and the ANG and would preserve the necessary personnel and aircraft to respond to domestic emergencies throughout the country.

After numerous discussions, significant differences remain with respect to manpower reductions, fighter aircraft and airlift needs. We encourage your consideration of cost neutral options for cross-leveling or reallocating programmed aircraft operations from the active service to the Guard.

Based on our call today, we understand that on Friday, March 23, you will be meeting with other Pentagon officials to discuss this matter internally. After that meeting, we hope to receive back an offer that can better meet the needs of governors and the ANG.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Terry E. Branstad in blue ink.

Governor Terry Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Handwritten signature of Christine O. Gregoire in blue ink.

Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

cc: General Craig McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau



Washington



Iowa

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Carter:

Thank you for your efforts to review the U.S. Air Force's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2013 and its disproportionate impact on the Air National Guard (ANG). We recognize and appreciate the need to reduce costs while providing for a strong national defense and pledge to work with you to resolve our concerns and develop a more collaborative process for future year defense decisions.

As we expressed to the leadership of the U.S. Air Force, governors have significant concerns with the budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2013 due to its disproportionate impact on ANG manpower as well as fighter aircraft and airlift capabilities. Through our Adjutants General, we proposed a comprehensive alternative that would ensure a more appropriate and flexible approach to reductions in the active forces and the ANG and preserve the necessary personnel and aircraft needed by federal authorities to prosecute military actions overseas and by state and federal officials to protect lives and property in our states and territories.

We look forward to a dialog with you about ways to maintain the ANG's important national defense and domestic emergency response capabilities while also meeting the Defense Department's overall goals for the Fiscal Year 2013 budget of implementing the new military strategy and reducing costs. We have worked together to achieve what many considered an unattainable objective – comprehensive and sustainable agreement on how to achieve unity of effort in military support for civil authorities. We're equally committed to working with you to ensure a collaborative process for future budget and policy proposals affecting our nation's National Guard.

Given the urgency of this issue, please let us know the timing of your review and when we will have an opportunity to discuss your recommendations.

Again, thank you for your efforts to address this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christine O. Gregoire in blue ink.

Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Handwritten signature of Terry Branstad in blue ink.

Governor Terry Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Terry Branstad
Governor of Iowa
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Branstad:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with you on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received from you and others about our FY13-17 budget.

In light of the approaching authorization committee markups on the Hill, I have provided our current assessment to committee leaders in the enclosed letter.

The Department's senior leadership and I have appreciated the opportunity to engage with you over the last several months on your perspectives and feedback on our FY13-17 budget, and we look forward to continuing to do so regarding defense support to civil authorities.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I have also asked my team to establish a sustained process with the Council of Governors to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I look forward to working with you to have such a process in place as DoD develops its plans and priorities for FY14.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "John M. McInerney", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

cc:
Secretary of the Air Force
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley
Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Stockton



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of Washington
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with you on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received from you and others about our FY13-17 budget.

In light of the approaching authorization committee markups on the Hill, I have provided our current assessment to committee leaders in the enclosed letter.

The Department's senior leadership and I have appreciated the opportunity to engage with you over the last several months on your perspectives and feedback on our FY13-17 budget, and we look forward to continuing to do so regarding defense support to civil authorities.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I have also asked my team to establish a sustained process with the Council of Governors to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I look forward to working with you to have such a process in place as DoD develops its plans and priorities for FY14.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the Secretary of Defense, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

cc:
Secretary of the Air Force
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley
Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Stockton



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable C. W. Bill Young
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with the Council of Governors on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received about our FY13-17 budget.

As you undoubtedly appreciate, my first responsibility is to ensure that we have a military force structure that is ready and capable to defend the nation. In light of the changing global security environment and fiscal realities, the Department undertook a comprehensive reassessment of our defense strategy, which President Obama announced in January 2012. Based on that strategy, the Air Force analyzed the proper mix of capabilities to ensure we can achieve our defense objectives on a day-to-day basis and surge air power in the event of a national crisis. This force structure also had to be cost-effective so that the Department could achieve savings of \$487 billion over 10 years as necessitated by the Budget Control Act.

After further review, the Air Force has determined that we can mitigate impacts to affected states with a \$400 million package that would maintain an additional 24 C-130 aircraft in the Air National Guard. We recognize the important role that these lift aircraft play in our support to civil authorities and to states – particularly in the event of natural disasters.

I strongly urge you to consider this proposal, which we believe sustains our national defense requirements and is responsive to concerns raised by the Council of Governors.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I will also be reaching out to the Council of Governors to establish a sustained process to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council and the Department has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and the DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I would expect to have such a process in place before the President's FY14 budget is submitted early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Don Rumsfeld", written over a horizontal line.

cc:
The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad
Washington Governor Christine Gregoire
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with the Council of Governors on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received about our FY13-17 budget.

As you undoubtedly appreciate, my first responsibility is to ensure that we have a military force structure that is ready and capable to defend the nation. In light of the changing global security environment and fiscal realities, the Department undertook a comprehensive reassessment of our defense strategy, which President Obama announced in January 2012. Based on that strategy, the Air Force analyzed the proper mix of capabilities to ensure we can achieve our defense objectives on a day-to-day basis and surge air power in the event of a national crisis. This force structure also had to be cost-effective so that the Department could achieve savings of \$487 billion over 10 years as necessitated by the Budget Control Act.

After further review, the Air Force has determined that we can mitigate impacts to affected states with a \$400 million package that would maintain an additional 24 C-130 aircraft in the Air National Guard. We recognize the important role that these lift aircraft play in our support to civil authorities and to states – particularly in the event of natural disasters.

I strongly urge you to consider this proposal, which we believe sustains our national defense requirements and is responsive to concerns raised by the Council of Governors.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I will also be reaching out to the Council of Governors to establish a sustained process to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council and the Department has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and the DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I would expect to have such a process in place before the President's FY14 budget is submitted early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the Secretary of Defense, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

cc:
The Honorable Tad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad
Washington Governor Christine Gregoire
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with the Council of Governors on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received about our FY13-17 budget.

As you undoubtedly appreciate, my first responsibility is to ensure that we have a military force structure that is ready and capable to defend the nation. In light of the changing global security environment and fiscal realities, the Department undertook a comprehensive reassessment of our defense strategy, which President Obama announced in January 2012. Based on that strategy, the Air Force analyzed the proper mix of capabilities to ensure we can achieve our defense objectives on a day-to-day basis and surge air power in the event of a national crisis. This force structure also had to be cost-effective so that the Department could achieve savings of \$487 billion over 10 years as necessitated by the Budget Control Act.

After further review, the Air Force has determined that we can mitigate impacts to affected states with a \$400 million package that would maintain an additional 24 C-130 aircraft in the Air National Guard. We recognize the important role that these lift aircraft play in our support to civil authorities and to states – particularly in the event of natural disasters.

I strongly urge you to consider this proposal, which we believe sustains our national defense requirements and is responsive to concerns raised by the Council of Governors.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I will also be reaching out to the Council of Governors to establish a sustained process to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council and the Department has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and the DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I would expect to have such a process in place before the President's FY14 budget is submitted early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the Secretary of Defense, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

cc:

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad
Washington Governor Christine Gregoire
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with the Council of Governors on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received about our FY13-17 budget.

As you undoubtedly appreciate, my first responsibility is to ensure that we have a military force structure that is ready and capable to defend the nation. In light of the changing global security environment and fiscal realities, the Department undertook a comprehensive reassessment of our defense strategy, which President Obama announced in January 2012. Based on that strategy, the Air Force analyzed the proper mix of capabilities to ensure we can achieve our defense objectives on a day-to-day basis and surge air power in the event of a national crisis. This force structure also had to be cost-effective so that the Department could achieve savings of \$487 billion over 10 years as necessitated by the Budget Control Act.

After further review, the Air Force has determined that we can mitigate impacts to affected states with a \$400 million package that would maintain an additional 24 C-130 aircraft in the Air National Guard. We recognize the important role that these lift aircraft play in our support to civil authorities and to states – particularly in the event of natural disasters.

I strongly urge you to consider this proposal, which we believe sustains our national defense requirements and is responsive to concerns raised by the Council of Governors.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I will also be reaching out to the Council of Governors to establish a sustained process to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council and the Department has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and the DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I would expect to have such a process in place before the President's FY14 budget is submitted early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the Secretary of Defense, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad
Washington Governor Christine Gregoire
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In February, I asked Air Force leadership to work with the Council of Governors on various options regarding Air National Guard force structure in light of feedback we received about our FY13-17 budget.

As you undoubtedly appreciate, my first responsibility is to ensure that we have a military force structure that is ready and capable to defend the nation. In light of the changing global security environment and fiscal realities, the Department undertook a comprehensive reassessment of our defense strategy, which President Obama announced in January 2012. Based on that strategy, the Air Force analyzed the proper mix of capabilities to ensure we can achieve our defense objectives on a day-to-day basis and surge air power in the event of a national crisis. This force structure also had to be cost-effective so that the Department could achieve savings of \$487 billion over 10 years as necessitated by the Budget Control Act.

After further review, the Air Force has determined that we can mitigate impacts to affected states with a \$400 million package that would maintain an additional 24 C-130 aircraft in the Air National Guard. We recognize the important role that these lift aircraft play in our support to civil authorities and to states – particularly in the event of natural disasters.

I strongly urge you to consider this proposal, which we believe sustains our national defense requirements and is responsive to concerns raised by the Council of Governors.

Recognizing the lead responsibilities of governors for the public safety of their citizens in disasters and emergencies, I will also be reaching out to the Council of Governors to establish a sustained process to exchange views, information, and advice on state civil support requirements. Given the notable success that the Council and the Department has achieved to strengthen unity of effort between the states and the DoD, I am confident that we can make similar progress to clarify and appropriately account for civil support requirements in the future. I would expect to have such a process in place before the President's FY14 budget is submitted early next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Don Rumsfeld", written in a cursive style.

cc:
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad
Washington Governor Christine Gregoire
Chief, NGB, General Craig R. McKinley