

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

1508 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-7682

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
9220 KIMMER DRIVE  
SUITE 220  
LONE TREE, CO 80124  
(720) 283-9772

June 2, 2009

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Room 3E880  
Washington DC. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Last week I had the opportunity to visit with our military and civilian leaders in both Iraq and Afghanistan. I was able to spend time talking to some of our troops and with members of our diplomatic corps as well. I was deeply impressed with the unwavering dedication of all of our young men and women who serve our nation during such difficult times and under such challenging circumstances.

This was my first trip back to Iraq since having served with the United States Marine Corps in al Anbar province from August 2005 to March 2006. No doubt, I was deeply impressed with the progress that has been made and I'm confident that we are now on our way to bringing our direct involvement in Iraq to a just conclusion.

However, I am deeply disturbed by what I saw in Afghanistan. There is little question that the focus of the main effort, since 2003, has been with Iraq and that we are only now shifting our attention to Afghanistan.

In neglecting Afghanistan, the radical elements of the Afghan Taliban have regained a strong foothold in the country. They have been able to deny the government of Afghanistan the security necessary for the political process to move forward and have caused much of the population to lose faith with their nascent representative government.

Mr. Secretary, we've made enough mistakes already in Afghanistan that have allowed the once-defeated enemy to reemerge and dominate whole provinces. It's time we were honest with the American people about the true cost of what it will take to win this war.

I'm reminded of how we reversed the situation in Iraq. General David Petraeus is credited with devising and executed a strategy commonly referred to as the "surge." The surge had two primary components that were at the heart of the strategy. The first part was increasing U.S. troop strength from 140,000 to 160,000 and the second was a redeployment of our forces from

OSD 06359-09



the larger more secure base camps, located outside of Iraqi population centers, to smaller forward operating bases within their communities. The surge provided enough security to allow the political process to move forward and thus gave Iraq a level of stability that now permits the United States and our coalition partners to proceed with a phased withdrawal from the country.

Afghanistan has no history of effective governance, has a larger and equally diverse population than Iraq, is physically a larger county than Iraq, and has a determined resurgent enemy. Yet when you add together our projected troop strength, military advisors and trainers (68,000) along with the contributions from our coalition partners in Afghanistan (32,000), it all comes out to a number that is far less than the commitment we made in Iraq during the surge in 2007 when Coalition Forces in Iraq totaled 168,000 plus 14,000 from our coalition partners. Equally troubling is the current plan's increase in Afghan security forces, both police and army, to 216,000 which is far less than the 615,000 total that is currently serving in Iraq.

While the Pakistan Army is now launching offensive operations against their indigenous Pakistani Taliban, they have shown little enthusiasm, if any, for confronting the Afghan Taliban on their side of the border who enjoy a safe haven critical to their success.

When I questioned you and Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee about the projected resources dedicated to Afghanistan, Admiral Mullen answered that once we get into the mission, we will have an opportunity to reassess what we need.

Mr. Secretary, I think that it is obvious that there are not sufficient resources dedicated to winning the war in Afghanistan and that each day we move forward without a sufficient plan is a day that prolongs this war and unnecessarily increases the number of our young men and women who are either killed or wounded.

My guess is that senior officials within the Department of Defense probably already know that the plan is inadequate but they are fearful that it will be unpopular to put out larger requirements and reverse the goal of giving our troops a longer dwell time between deployments. It would also force reconsideration of the three additional Army brigade combat teams that were initially planned for but were cut out of the Administration's new Defense budget.

Mr. Secretary, again, by not putting in the necessary resources to win in Afghanistan, we are continuing the same old policies of dragging out a war that has already gone on for too long and has cost too many lives.

The right thing to do may not be the best decision politically for the Administration, but it is the best decision on behalf of those whom we are asking to serve in Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
8TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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August 7, 2009

The Honorable Elizabeth L. King  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Legislative Affairs  
Washington DC 20301-1300

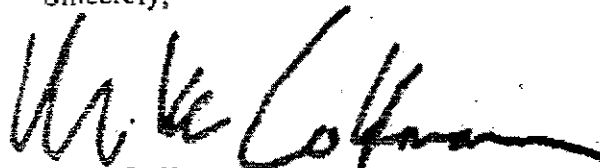
Dear Secretary King:

I am writing to formally request a Department of Defense Legislative Fellow for the calendar year 2010. As a Member of the House Armed Services Committee and a two-time Marine Corps combat veteran, national security is my top priority as a Member of Congress. My office maintains a high operations tempo, and the Defense Fellow would be given great opportunity to thrive and take on a variety of duties as part of my legislative team.

Please don't hesitate to contact my Military Legislative Assistant, Miss Jennifer Shirley, at (202) 226-6998 or via email at [Jennifer.Shirley@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Shirley@mail.house.gov) should you need any additional information and to set up interviews.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I appreciate your work on behalf of our warfighters and the United States Congress.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman

Member of Congress

OSD 10149-09



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 4, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our grave concerns over reports that three Navy SEALs will face court-martial proceedings over their handling of one of the most wanted terrorists in Iraq. Based on the information we have, we believe that prosecution of these men is not warranted.

As you are aware, in September, the three SEALs in question captured Ahmed Hashim Abed, the alleged planner of the March 2004 ambush in Fallujah that resulted in the killing of four Blackwater contractors. We all remember the horrifying pictures showing two of these individuals whose bodies, after being burned and mutilated, were hung on a bridge over the Euphrates River.

Since 2004, Abed evaded capture. However, in September, Special Warfare Operators 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Matthew McCabe and Jonathan Keefe, and Special Warfare Operator 1<sup>st</sup> Class Julio Huertas undertook a mission that resulted in Abed's capture. Soon after his capture, an investigation was conducted based on reports that Abed had been struck in the stomach by one of the SEALs. As we understand it, there was no allegation of torture or sustained abuse. There was simply just this one alleged act.

Prosecuting individuals for such a limited act seems to us to be an overreaction by the command. As a result of the investigation, the three SEALs refused to accept non-judicial punishment believing, according to one of the defense attorneys, that they are innocent of the charges. If convicted they could face significant punishment of up to one year's confinement, a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of a portion of their pay each month for up to a year and a reduction in their rank.

It appears from all accounts that these SEALs are exceptional sailors, demonstrated by the fact that each had recently been advanced in rank. They captured a terrorist who had planned an attack that not only killed Americans but also maimed and mutilated their bodies. We believe that prosecution of these sailors for such an apparently limited action will have a negative impact on others in the military who risk their lives in dangerous, often ambiguous situations.

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Again, we strongly believe that these court-martial proceedings are not warranted and would urge that you review this matter.

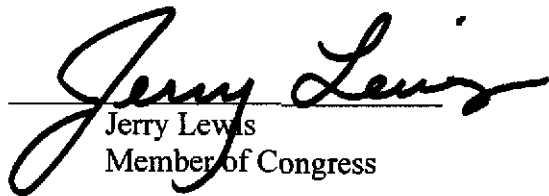
Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress



John Boehner  
House Republican Leader



Jerry Lewis  
Member of Congress



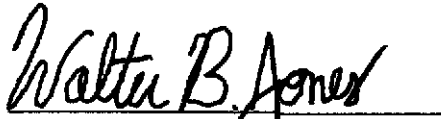
Bill Young  
Member of Congress



Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Member of Congress



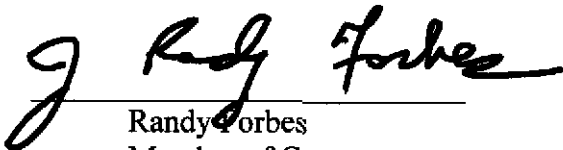
Kay Granger  
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



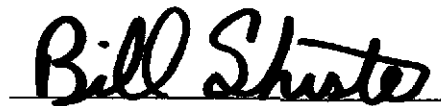
Todd Akin  
Member of Congress



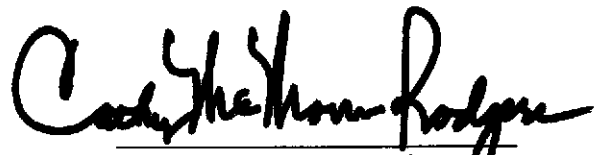
Randy Forbes  
Member of Congress




Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress





Bill Shuster  
Member of Congress



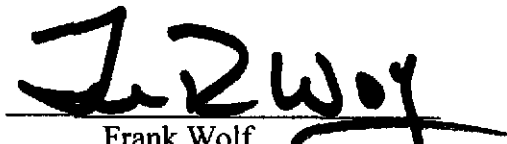
Cathy McMorris Rogers  
Member of Congress

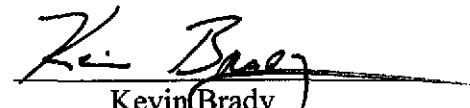
  
Robert Wittman  
Member of Congress


  
Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress


  
Tom Rooney  
Member of Congress


  
Todd Platts  
Member of Congress

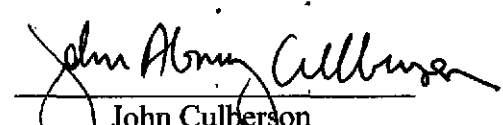
  
Frank Wolf  
Member of Congress


  
Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress

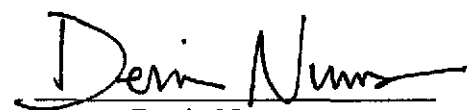
  
Roy Blunt  
Member of Congress

  
Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress

  
Brian Bilbray  
Member of Congress

  
John Culberson  
Member of Congress

  
Patrick Tiberi  
Member of Congress

  
Devin Nunes  
Member of Congress

Pete Olson

Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

Brett Guthrie

Brett Guthrie  
Member of Congress

Jason Chaffetz

Jason Chaffetz  
Member of Congress

Sue Kelly

Frank A. Lucas

Glenn M. Paulsen

Alan Klink

Glenn Ryan

Scott Franks

John Kline

John Boozman



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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

January 19, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am writing to express my strong concern about evidence of the misuse of, or failure of oversight regarding, funds authorized and appropriated for the reconstruction of Iraq, including the rebuilding of the security forces. I have closely reviewed the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) most recent 2009 quarterly report to Congress, and considered its implications for the authorization and appropriation of additional funding for Iraq's reconstruction.

I am frustrated and disappointed by reports of gross misuse of funds, a glaring example of which was a one million dollar mural near the Baghdad airport funded by the Commander's Emergency Reconstruction fund. With all the problems facing our own nation, not to mention Iraq and the region, how could this possibly be the best use of our money? Why are we still funding Iraqi infrastructure at a time when the United States has an estimated deficit of \$1.6 trillion and a national debt of \$12.3 trillion?

The above is but one glaring example, for as noted in SIGIR's own report, "Iraq Reconstruction Funds: Forensic Audits Identifying Waste, Fraud, and Abuse—Interim Report #1," an examination of 22,000 Defense Department transactions involving about \$10.7 billion has preliminarily identified not just overpayments by the government, but also duplicate payments, and payments to fictitious people and addresses.

As a Marine Corps combat veteran who served in both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, I strongly believe that it should go without saying that these funds must be managed in such a way as to assure addressing the underlying causes of instability in Iraq. Our own national interests are not served by simply wasting taxpayer dollars to redecorate a country hit by war. At a time when we have so many pressing readiness and procurement needs for our own military, and for our nation as whole, this is not meant to be a blank check.

I remain committed to this topic of concern and request additional information on this troubling issue for the American taxpayer. Please provide additional information on the following areas of inquiry:



- *Of the four billion dollars already appropriated, but unobligated or unexpended in Department of Defense Reconstruction accounts such as the Commander's Emergency Response Program or the Iraq Security Forces Fund, what is the breakdown of planned spending by specific purpose?*
- *Can unobligated funds be redirected to better use?*
- *What is the plan for obligation of these funds for various purposes and are these accounts being scrubbed for possible deobligation or reallocation toward higher national security priorities?*

I welcome any opportunity to discuss this critical matter further. I know you share my view that we must all make every effort to assure that American taxpayer funding is spent responsibly and while keeping concrete goals serving our own national interest closely in mind.

Thank you for your time and prompt attention to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Mike Coffman

Member of Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 19, 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable John McHugh  
Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Dear Secretaries Gates and McHugh:

As you know, traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been dubbed the signature injuries of our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because there are often challenges in identifying and treating these invisible wounds of war, the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act included provisions aimed at creating a comprehensive approach to addressing these maladies across the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. Among those provisions was language requiring that DOD provide pre- and post-deployment neurocognitive assessment for members of the Armed Services for the purpose of identifying TBI, PTSD, and other mental health conditions.

We are reassured that DOD has implemented pre-deployment neurocognitive assessments across all Services. Unfortunately, we recently learned that the use of the same neurocognitive assessment instrument is specifically not authorized for post-deployment assessment of our returning soldiers in the Army. Not only is this approach ineffective at identifying brain injuries, we believe that it violates the intent of the 2008 law.

It can often be challenging to identify TBIs—particularly so-called “mild” brain injuries and concussion, which recent research suggests may result in real, long-term health consequences. The Consensus Statement from the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion that was held in Zurich in November 2008—which currently stands as the preeminent consensus document on concussion—concluded that neuropsychological testing has clinical value and contributes a significant amount of information to the evaluation of mild brain injury and concussion. However, in order to effectively identify a TBI, it is of the utmost importance that the same neuropsychological test be provided both pre- and post-incident—in this situation, deployment—in order to produce a consistent metric.



In light of this information, we respectfully request a briefing at your earliest convenience to provide us with an update on both the Department and the Army's handling of pre- and post-deployment cognitive assessment. Please have your offices coordinate the logistics of this briefing with Ben Rich (202-225-5751, [ben.rich@mail.house.gov](mailto:ben.rich@mail.house.gov)) of Congressman Pascrell's office.

We look forward to your prompt reply and thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



James Inhofe  
United States Senator



Todd Russell Platts  
Member of Congress



Tom Cole  
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

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(720) 283-9772

May 24, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am writing to express my strong concern that the US Army Reserve recently enlisted a man, Jesse Johnston, based on false documentation he provided to US Army recruiters. This was first exposed by an Associated Press investigation on May 21, 2010 (AP Investigation: Texas man faked way into Army). Based on the Associated Press investigation and documentation provided to my office, it appears by using a phony DD-214 Mr. Johnston was waived from Basic Combat Training and entered the US Army Reserve as a sergeant. All indications at this point are that the DD-214, which showed that he had previously served in the US Marine Corps for four years (with two years and eight months combat duty in Iraq/Afghanistan), was forged. Evidently, the US Army had not vetted his prior service when he enlisted in the US Army Reserve.

I am extremely troubled by the national security implications of this case and the questions it raises. If it was possible for Mr. Johnston to falsify records, be placed in leadership positions, and possibly obtain access to classified materials, then it may be just as easy for our nation's enemies.

The fact that the Department of the Army does not immediately verify that someone has or has not previously served is both stunning and frightening. Further, the simple fact that someone like Mr. Johnston could slip through the cracks of the US Army's records system poses additional questions:

- If there is at least one such fraud in a leadership position in today's US Army Reserve, how many more are there?
- Has the US Army identified the cause of this failure?
- Can the Department of Defense confirm this is an isolated incident?
- Is there a larger systemic failure yet to be addressed?

If the US Army failed to verify Mr. Johnston's prior service, they may also have missed other hidden fraud. If someone with no prior military service could convince the US Army to enlist him as a sergeant without any training, based upon false paperwork, it seems plausible that someone previously court-martialed could rejoin the military by providing false documents.

OSD 06681-10



MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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Worse, a criminal or terrorist could seemingly use a stolen identity and/or fabricated documents to join the military.

I am sure you share my grave concerns over this inexcusable security breach. I welcome any opportunity to discuss this critical matter further.

Thank you for your prompt attention and formal reply to this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Elizabeth L. King  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Legislative Affairs  
Washington DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary King:

I am writing to formally request a Department of Defense Legislative Fellow for the calendar year 2011. As a Member of the House Armed Services Committee and Marine Corps combat veteran, national security is my top priority as a Member of Congress. My office maintains a high operations tempo, and the Defense Fellow would be given great opportunity to thrive and take on a variety of duties as part of my legislative team.

Please don't hesitate to contact my Military Legislative Assistant, Miss Jennifer Shirley, at (202) 226-6998 or via email at [Jennifer.Shirley@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Shirley@mail.house.gov) should you need any additional information and to set up interviews.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I appreciate your work on behalf of our warfighters and the United States Congress.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman

Member of Congress

OSD 08869-10



Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to ascertain your Department's implementation and enforcement of the relevant provisions of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (P.L. 111-195), which the President signed into law on July 1, 2010.

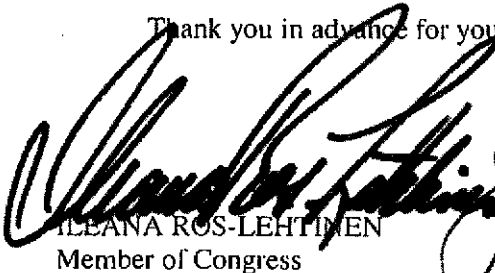
As you know, section 102(b)(3) of that legislation amended the Iran Sanctions Act (50 USC 1701 note) to require that the Federal Acquisition Regulation be revised by not later than September 29, 2010, "to require a certification from each person that is a prospective contractor that the person, and any person owned or controlled by the person owned or controlled by the person, does not engage in any activity for which sanctions may be imposed under section 5" of the Iran Sanctions Act. Section 102(b)(3) also requires the head of an executive agency, if he "determines that a person has submitted a false certification" in this regard, to "terminate a contract with such person or debar or suspend such person from eligibility for Federal contracts for a period of not more than 3 years."

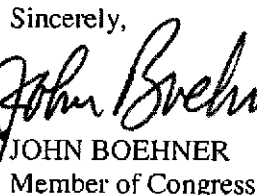
Reports indicate that the Department of Defense has contracted with numerous entities that may have conducted sanctionable activities under section 5 of the Iran Sanctions Act, including: Aker Solutions; Daelim Industrial Corporation; Eni; Inpex; Komatsu; Maersk; Repsol; Royal Dutch Shell; Sasol Limited; ThyssenKrupp AG; Total; and WorleyParsons.

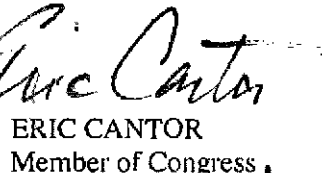
Therefore, we would respectfully request information on your Department's plans or actions already undertake to come into compliance with the statutory requirements, including by requiring the above-referenced certifications and ceasing any contracting with entities that continue to conduct sanctionable activities under section 5 of the Iran Sanctions Act.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this request.

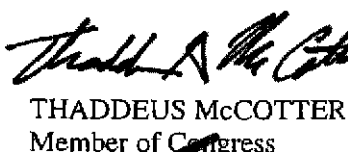
Sincerely,

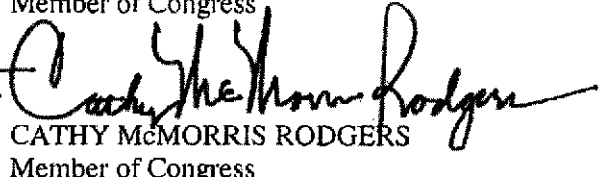
  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN  
Member of Congress

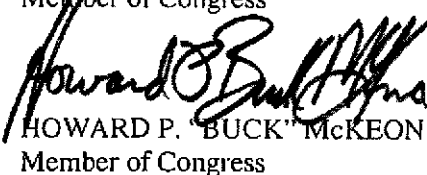
  
JOHN BOEHNER  
Member of Congress

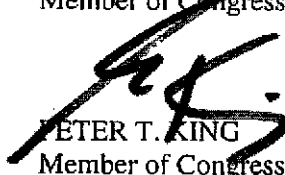
  
ERIC CANTOR  
Member of Congress

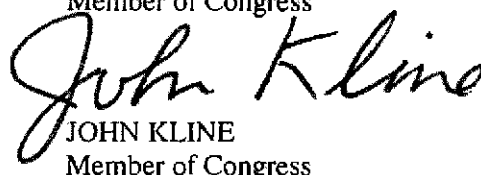
  
MIKE PENCE  
Member of Congress

  
THADDEUS McCOTTER  
Member of Congress

  
CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS  
Member of Congress

  
HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON  
Member of Congress


  
PETER T. KING  
Member of Congress


  
JOHN KLINE  
Member of Congress

OSD 13599-10

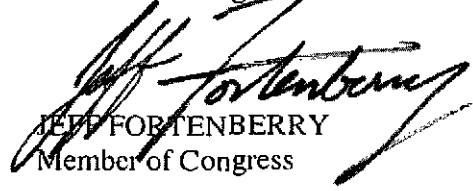


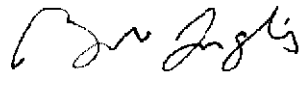


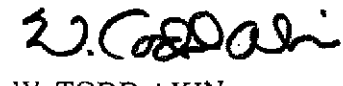
  
DAN BURTON  
Member of Congress

  
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress


  
CONNIE MACK  
Member of Congress


  
JEFF FORTENBERRY  
Member of Congress


  
BOB INGLIS  
Member of Congress

  
W. TODD AKIN  
Member of Congress


  
ROB BISHOP  
Member of Congress

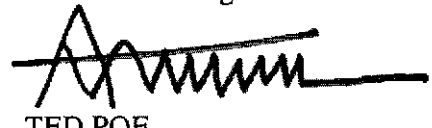
  
DUNCAN D. HUNTER  
Member of Congress

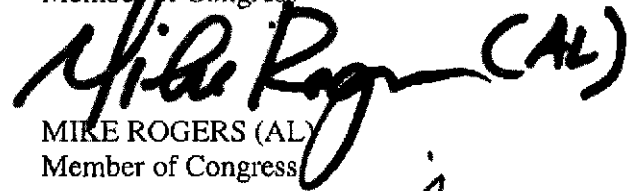
  
CHARLES K. DJOU  
Member of Congress


  
EDWARD R. ROYCE  
Member of Congress

  
DONALD A. MANZULLO  
Member of Congress

  
ROSCOE G. BARTLETT  
Member of Congress


  
TED POE  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE ROGERS (AL)  
Member of Congress

  
FRANK A. LoBIONDO  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE COFFMAN  
Member of Congress

  
THOMAS J. ROONEY  
Member of Congress

  
BILL SHUSTER  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL R. TURNER  
Member of Congress



SCOTT GARRETT  
Member of Congress



J. GRESHAM BARRETT  
Member of Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

1508 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-7882

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0606

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
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LOVE TREE, CO 80124  
(720) 283-9772

November 19, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

When I enlisted in the United States Army in 1972, the United States was still entrenched in an ideological struggle with the nations and the insurgencies who strongly held a shared allegiance to Marxist Communism and who listed the United States as their chief adversary.

I can clearly remember as a young soldier being ordered to affirm, under oath, whether I was or had ever been a member of the Communist Party and whether I had any associations or sympathies with other related organizations that might call into question my allegiance to the United States government. I was assigned to an armored division in Europe where an active counterintelligence operation made sure this enemy ideology never penetrated our ranks.

The United States, once again, finds itself in an ideological struggle - more challenging than the last. This time a political ideology has emerged that is fraudulently camouflaged within a religious tradition and is so twisted in its beliefs that it values death over life and uses terrorism as its only tactic.

Just as the United States had previously recognized that it was in an ideological war with Marxist Communism, now it must come to terms with accurately describing the current threat to our national security: radical Islam. Unfortunately, our military, constrained by the Obama administration, has yet to do so for fear that it might offend the loyal adherents to the virtues of political correctness that has led this administration to change "Global War on Terror" to "Overseas Contingency Operations" and "Terrorists Attacks" to "Man-Caused Disasters." Neither of these semantic changes,



nor any other attempts at avoiding reality, has altered the fact that we are at war with radical Islam and that terrorism is their weapon of choice.

Three days after the massacre at Ft. Hood, Texas where 13 soldiers were killed and 30 were wounded, General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, stated, "Speculation could potentially heighten backlash against some of our Muslim soldiers and what happened at Ft. Hood was a tragedy, but I believe it would be an even greater tragedy if our diversity becomes a casualty here."

The U.S. Army's "*Final Report on Fort Hood*," released last week, reflects the views earlier expressed by General Casey in avoiding the role that radical Islam played in the killing of 13 American soldiers.

The final report does recognize that the Army did not properly identify the internal threat Major Nidal Hasan posed before he killed 13 American soldiers, but, unfortunately, it falls short of identifying the significance of the threat that the radicalization of Muslims can pose within our military.

Because the *Fort Hood Shooting Army Internal Review Team* did not recognize and clearly address the threat of radical Islam, I believe it gives further evidence to a failure of leadership. I am calling for immediate action on your part, and that of the Department of the Army, to update the report to accurately address this threat and detail what appropriate measures are necessary to counter it.

I served in Iraq in 2005 and in 2006 with the U.S. Marine Corps where I met Muslim-Americans who served our nation with distinction and were every bit as patriotic as other members of our military. I strongly believe that it would be in the best interest of not only our military but to Muslim Americans, in particular, to have a vigorous vetting process whereby members of our Armed Forces would have full confidence that all our service men and women could, at all times, be counted on.

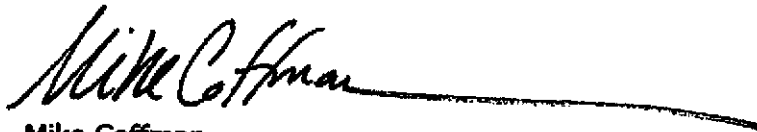
The unintended consequences of the "politically correct" approach, currently advocated by the U.S. Army, will ultimately have the negative effect of only increasing the suspicions of Muslim American military personnel and thereby potentially causing increased alienation, segregation, and finally the radicalization of Muslim American personnel.

I strongly believe that the failure to classify radical Islam as an ideological threat to the United States led to the loss of 13 American soldiers at Ft. Hood, Texas. If we continue down this path we will fail to develop the counterintelligence capability necessary to prevent future incidents from occurring. It is time now for the American people to ask:

How many more soldiers must be sacrificed at the altar of political correctness before our military changes course?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and highest priority matter. I stand willing to discuss this with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Mike Coffman

United States Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

## Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0606

November 30, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am writing regarding the survey of service members released today as part of the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."* (DADT) I have reservations about the validity of this survey's summarized results.

The survey results formatted in this report state that the majority of Department of Defense personnel believe the repeal of DADT would have little or no effect on their units. This is interesting, but not overwhelmingly significant. Based on my experiences serving as an enlisted infantryman in the U.S. Army and a infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, I am as yet unconvinced the results of this survey clearly forecast the impact of a repeal of this policy.

Our nation is currently involved in two wars, so while it is laudable that the survey sought input from all military occupational fields in the armed forces, the most important goal of the survey should have been to judge the impact of repealing DADT on our warfighters. To that end, no group is more important at this critical time than those on the 'tip of the spear' who serve in the infantry of the U.S. Army and Marines. The results of these groups' views were not specifically provided. Therefore, I am officially requesting that the actual survey results from the leaders - noncommissioned and commissioned officers - who serve in the infantry occupational field (11B series in the Army and 0300 series in the Marine Corps) be broken down by each grade and released.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and prompt attention to this critical matter for our nation's warfighters.

Sincerely,



Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

OSD 14137-10



# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 28, 2011

Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

We write to express concern about the availability of rare earth materials. Many of our nation's most important military systems rely on rare earths and high performance magnets. In spite of our dependency on rare earth materials for components critical to weapon system performance, over ninety-seven percent of the worldwide rare earth oxide production is based in China, leaving the United States dependent on an unreliable foreign supplier. For example, Department of Defense (DOD) officials have stated magnets required for precision weapons, like the joint direct attack munition, are sourced directly from China, and there exists no alternative supply domestically or within allied nations.

Clearly, rare earth supply limitations present a serious vulnerability to our national security. Yet early indications are the DOD has dismissed the severity of the situation to date. Based on initial discussions with the DOD Office of Industrial Policy, we understand the effort to precisely ascertain and fully comprehend DOD consumption of certain rare earth elements is still an ongoing effort. In our view, it is a fundamental responsibility of DOD Industrial Policy to have a comprehensive understanding of the security of our defense supply chain, which requires understanding detailed knowledge of the sources and types of components and materials found in our weapon systems.

As the ultimate customer, the Department has the right and responsibility to require their contractors to provide a detailed accounting of the various rare earth containing components within their weapon systems. This information should then be aggregated into an element by element overall demand for DOD. With that knowledge, DOD could compare expected supply and demand of each rare earth element with overall consumption by the Department to identify critical vulnerabilities in our supply chain. This will enable the Department to establish policies to ensure the defense supply chain has access to those materials. For example, one policy may be for the DOD to establish a limited stockpile of rare earth alloys that are in danger of supply interruption to ensure security of supply of both metals and magnets.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding DOD consumption, DOD Industrial Policy Director Brett Lambert was recently quoted as saying, "the U.S. must only survive a few more years of

OSD 00891-11



Secretary Gates  
January 28, 2011  
Page 2

Beijing's dominance over rare earths minerals supply and pricing, then American and key allies should be able to turn the tables." He has also argued market forces will naturally bring new supply sources on-line in the foreseeable future. However, the new sources of rare earths projected to be available in the near-term are primarily light rare earths. The recent Department of Energy Critical Materials Strategy notes some of the most critical materials are heavy rare earths.

Therefore, the new sources may not alleviate supply shortages faced by DOD. Additionally, manufacturing capabilities required to convert materials into the components needed for our defense systems are virtually non-existent in the United States today and to our knowledge, no prime contractor has long-term supply agreements to ensure access in a fully secure supply chain. Given the dwindling domestic supply chain and struggle to accurately identify DOD consumption of rare earth elements, we respectfully disagree with Director Lambert's initial assessment.

Our modern technological economy, from hybrid cars to direct drive windmills to consumer electronics, requires rare earth dependent components and will impact product availability. Fully understanding the aggregate demand for rare earth materials and necessity of the demand will be essential to understanding the supply limits, the future market, and formulating U.S. policy on these materials. Therefore, we urge the Department to wholly recognize the national security implications of limited rare earth materials, define aggregate demand by requiring a full accounting of consumption by its contractors, define DOD's current and future demand for these materials by comparing usage to future years weapons inventories, and propose real solutions on rare earth availability in the report due to Congress (Section 843 of Public Law 111-383, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011). We also request the expected delivery date of this report so that we can discuss this issue in greater depth and cooperatively address this growing concern.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



Mike Coffman  
United States Representative



MIKE COFFMAN  
8TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
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AMENDMENT CAUCUS  
CHAIRMAN

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0606

August 3, 2011

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

In the wake of the tragic murder of 13 U.S. Army personnel at Fort Hood on November 5, 2009, I corresponded with your predecessor, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, about my concerns with the investigation into that incident. I believe that the U.S. Army's "Final Report on Fort Hood" failed to identify and articulate many of the lessons that could prevent a similar incident in the future.

Although I applaud the apprehension of U.S. Army Private First Class Naser Abdo before he could carry out his planned attack, I am deeply troubled by the fact that we have apparently continued to ignore the threat of violent radical Islam within the ranks of our military, as demonstrated by Nidal Hasan nearly two years ago. In his case, it is clear that warning signs of his violent radicalization were ignored. While Hasan repeatedly demonstrated his radical beliefs, not only was he retained on active duty, but he was also promoted to the rank of Major.

I am concerned that there is a pervasive attitude of political correctness imposed upon the command structure of our military that discourages frank and honest reporting from junior leaders. I believe that many of Major Hassan's fellow Army officers had serious and well-founded concerns about his loyalty to the United States but were afraid to voice these concerns due to fear of reprisal from the chain of command. In my estimation, similar warning signs may have been ignored in the case of Private First Class Abdo. I am thankful that no one was harmed in this incident, but I believe it demonstrates that the specter of violent radical Islam within the Department of Defense is still an unresolved issue.

When I enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1972, I can clearly remember being ordered to affirm, under oath, whether I was or had ever been a member of the Communist Party and whether I had any associations or sympathies with other related organizations that



might call into question my allegiance to the United States government. I was assigned to an armored division in Europe where an active counterintelligence operation ensured this enemy ideology never penetrated our ranks.

The United States, once again, finds itself in an ideological struggle – more challenging than the last. This time a political ideology has emerged that is fraudulently camouflaged within a religious tradition and is so twisted in its beliefs that it values death over life and uses terrorism as its only tactic. Just as the United States had previously recognized that it was in an ideological war with Marxist Communism, now it must come to terms with accurately describing the current threat to our national security: radical Islam.

I strongly believe that the failure to classify radical Islam as an ideological threat to the United States led to the loss of 13 U.S. Army personnel at Fort Hood in 2009 and likely would have led to a similar attack by Private First Class Abdo, had he not been reported to the local authorities by an attentive store clerk. If we continue down the path of political correctness, we will fail to develop the counterintelligence capability necessary to prevent future incidents from occurring. How many more lives must be lost before the military changes course and confronts the problem of Islamic radicalization within its ranks?

I request your response to this matter. I further request a copy of the complete service records of Private First Class Naser Abdo and records of the proceedings granting him status as a conscientious objector be promptly made available to me for review.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and highest priority matter. I stand willing to discuss this with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Mike Coffman  
United States Congress

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 5, 2011

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta:

Under Section 843 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (Public Law 111-383), "Assessment and Plan for Critical Rare Earth Materials in Defense Applications," you were legally obligated to submit a rare earths-related report to the key congressional committees by July 6, 2011. While I am concerned that you failed to meet the deadline for this important report, I am even more disturbed that Department of Defense officials are providing conflicting reasons for this report's tardiness, offering no insight into the report's substantive content, and setting no firm alternative date for delivery.

In the last year, the global market has raised serious questions about the availability of certain rare earth materials, which many of our nation's most important military systems – such as precision-guided munitions, satellite wave tubes, range-finding lasers, and electric drive ship programs – rely upon. The report required by Section 843 must set forth both a fairly comprehensive supply-chain assessment of defense-critical rare earth materials and a risk mitigation plan to ensure long-term availability of these materials. It must also include a survey of first-line processors of rare earths and identification of demand, by element, for specific compounds. Thus, compliance with the law is the critical first step in identifying our rare earth requirements for defense applications and reducing our nation's unacceptable dependency on unreliable foreign suppliers for these materials.

When queried about the status of this report, Department of Defense officials have provided a variety of responses. Some attempts to excuse the lateness of the report hint at gaps in data. Others point to an additional requirement for a rare earth inventory plan in the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 and suggest that the section 843 report must be delayed, pending resolution of this additional requirement later this year. None of these excuses are acceptable.

Congressional intent underlying this reporting requirement is simple: Members of Congress need to understand defense demand for, and the supply-chain of, rare earth materials in order to help ensure availability of needed materials. In the on-going absence of a final report, we expect your Department to submit an interim report by August 19 (six weeks after the report deadline) that, at a minimum, provides:

- An estimate of both supply and demand, by element;




- A discussion of value-added capacities along the end-to-end supply chain of defense-related rare earth materials. This discussion may include a range of data from multiple sources; and
- Draft recommendations that can better enable conferees and staffs to engage in thoughtful, pragmatic dialogue on rare earth topics in the context of the defense authorization bill.

We recognize that the Section 843 report requires significant effort to gather and analyze data and develop useful recommendations and a risk mitigation plan. However, we find it unacceptable that Defense Department officials have failed to offer a reasonable explanation for the report's lateness and, given that tardiness, any interim or draft description of the report's substance. We look forward to receiving insights into the key areas we've outlined above.

Sincerely,


  
Congressman Mike Coffman

  
Congressman Doug Lamborn

  
Congressman Joe Heck

  
Congressman Mark S. Critz

  
Congressman Duncan Hunter

  
Congressman Walter B. Jones

  
Congressman Hank Johnson

  
Congressman Trent Franks

  
Congressman Todd Young

**SEC. 843. ASSESSMENT AND PLAN FOR CRITICAL RARE EARTH MATERIALS IN DEFENSE APPLICATIONS.**

**(a) Assessment Required.--**

(1) In general.--The Secretary of Defense shall undertake an assessment of the supply and demand for rare earth materials in defense applications and identify which, if any, rare earth material meets both of the following criteria:

(A) The rare earth material is critical to the production, sustainment, or operation of significant United States military equipment.

(B) The rare earth material is subject to interruption of supply, based on actions or events outside the control of the Government of the United States.

(2) Evaluation of supply.--The assessment shall include a comprehensive evaluation of the long-term security and availability of all aspects of the supply chain for rare earth materials in defense applications, particularly the location and number of sources at each step of the supply chain, including--

(A) mining of rare earth ores;

(B) separation of rare earth oxides;

(C) refining and reduction of rare earth metals;

(D) creation of rare earth alloys;

(E) manufacturing of components and systems containing rare earth materials; and

(F) recycling of components and systems to reclaim and reuse rare earth materials.

(3) Evaluation of demand.--The assessment shall include a comprehensive evaluation of the demand for and usage of rare earth materials in all defense applications, including--

(A) approximations of the total amounts of individual rare earth materials used in defense applications;

(B) determinations of which, if any, defense applications are dependent upon rare earth materials for proper operation and functioning; and

(C) assessments of the feasibility of alternatives to usage of rare earth materials in defense applications.

(4) Other studies and agencies.--Any applicable studies conducted by the Department of Defense, the Comptroller General of the United States, or other Federal agencies during fiscal year 2010 may be considered as partial fulfillment of the requirements of this section. The Secretary may consider the views of other Federal agencies, as appropriate.

(5) Specific material included.--At a minimum, the Secretary shall identify sintered neodymium iron boron magnets as meeting the criteria specified in paragraph (1).

(b) Plan.--For each rare earth material pursuant to subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall develop a plan to ensure the long-term availability of such rare earth material, a goal of establishing an assured source of supply of such material critical defense applications by December 31, 2015. In developing the plan, the Secretary shall consider all aspects of the material's supply chain, as described in subsection (a)(2). The plan shall include consideration of numerous risk mitigation methods with respect to the material, including--

(1) an assessment of including the material in the National Defense Stockpile;

(2) in consultation with the United States Trade Representative, the identification of any trade practices known to the Secretary that limit the Secretary's ability to ensure the long-term

availability of such material or the ability to meet the goal of establishing an assured source of supply of such material by December 31, 2015;

(3) an assessment of the availability of financing to industry, academic institutions, or not-for-profit entities to provide the capacity required to ensure the availability of the material, as well as potential mechanisms to increase the availability of such financing;

(4) an assessment of the benefits, if any, of Defense Production Act funding to support the establishment of an assured source of supply for military components;

(5) an assessment of funding for research and development related to any aspect of the rare earth material supply chain or research on alternatives and substitutes;

(6) any other risk mitigation method determined appropriate by the Secretary that is consistent with the goal of establishing an assured source of supply by December 31, 2015; and

(7) for steps of the rare earth material supply chain for which no other risk mitigation method, as described in paragraphs (1) through (6), will ensure an assured source of supply by December 31, 2015, a specific plan to eliminate supply chain vulnerability by the earliest date practicable.

**(c) Report.--**

(1) Requirement.--Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional committees described in paragraph (2) a report containing the findings of the assessment required under subsection (a) and the plan developed under subsection (b).

(2) Congressional committees.--The congressional committees described in this paragraph are as follows:

(A) The congressional defense committees.

(B) The Committee on Science and Technology, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives.

(C) The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
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**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

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August 11, 2011

Col. A. Amaral  
Legislative Affairs Officer  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1300 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Col. Amaral,

This letter is in reference to a contract that was awarded on July 27, 2011 by the Defense Commissary Agency to suppliers under the Brand Name Fresh Chicken Merchandising Program, (Ref. NTT 11-77 & 11-81 DeCA). Our constituent Erica Ford, a principal of Highplains Marketing Services, Inc.(HMS) contacted this office with a major concern regarding the award and then the abrupt cancellation of same on August 8, 2011. She had been awarded the contract for Areas 1 & 2 with Pilgrim's Pride, out of the 6 areas open for the bid.

The ramifications of DOD's actions need to be expressed in economic terms with real people job losses and financial liabilities to the vendors. This company had been working on this bid for three years so when the contract was awarded and given the 30 day window to be operational (9/1/11), they immediately put a plan into action with commitments in personnel and logistics to be ready for that September 1, 2011 start date. They hired new employees, signed independent contracts for stockers, sent out to the various distribution point manuals and training books. The Pilgrim's Pride plant in North Carolina geared up for the delivery of the estimated 45 million pounds of chicken required in the contract. This meant that they turned down other business as did the small business broker in Colorado (HMS), which cannot be recovered in any reasonable amount of time given the current soft market conditions in the region and the country as a whole. Another consideration would be that on a rebid as you suggest, would put HMS at a competitive disadvantage along with perhaps the four other area award winners. Their bids and price points are now out there for losers to use to low bid in the future.

OSD 10292-11



Since the Government diligently awarded the contract based on DOD criteria and in your words, "Based on the Best Value to our Military Customers", I would ask that the rescind action of 8/8/11 be revisited. I cannot speak to or for the other area winners and now subsequent losers as to what the negative financial ramifications would be, but I would surmise that they would be similar to how it impacts HMS in Colorado.

Thank you for consideration in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myron Spangler", written over a horizontal line.

Myron Spangler  
Constituent Advocate  
Lone Tree, Colorado



# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2011

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable James R. Clapper, Jr.  
Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Secretary Panetta and Director Clapper:

We write to express our support for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's (NGA) EnhancedView (EV) program. Under the "2 + 2" concept, the government initiated a public-private partnership in Fiscal Year 2010 to leverage commercial satellite imagery to cost-effectively complement national overhead capabilities. It is our understanding that the commercial sector's performance is right on target. The government gained immediate access to new, more capable assets resulting in significant day-to-day imagery collection, production, and services supporting the defense and intelligence communities.

The current administration, through presidential directives and national space policies, continues to express support for using commercial industry to the maximum extent practicable to meet government needs. This approach provides the United States and our allies a valuable source of shareable geospatial data to support coalition operations; grows an organic industrial base that creates high technology jobs; and maintains the U.S. industry as a premier commercial satellite imagery provider in the global marketplace.

The EnhancedView construct also allows the government to leverage private investment. The two U.S. commercial satellite imagery providers collectively committed over a billion dollars of private capital to fulfill their EV obligations, well in advance of being paid by the government, predicated on a stable, ten-year commitment by the government in the form of the EV contract. In this period of extreme fiscal restraint, this partnership represents a creative solution that should be applauded and emulated.

Despite these successes, it is our understanding that under budget pressures, the Department of Defense is considering major reductions that could potentially result in severe damage to the EV program. These potential impacts are greater given the investments both satellite imagery providers have already made to create new satellites, ground infrastructure, and operational capability to meet NGA's needs for improved collection capability, faster timelines, and increased security.

In addition, a change to the EnhancedView baseline could mean a lasting loss of credibility for the U.S. Government when it comes to any similar arrangement in the future, whether it is for commercial space launch, telecommunications, or any other area that requires industry to make up-front investments against a long-term need.

We appreciate the enormity of the challenge you face in attempting to balance projected funding with needed future capabilities. However, we seek your support to ensure that the Department and



Intelligence Community confront this difficult decision in a balanced and objective manner and ensure that the capability needed in the future is not irreparably lost.

We firmly believe the U.S. commercial remote sensing industry will continue to create jobs and remain globally competitive, if the government fulfills its commitment. A continued partnership with the government will allow the industry to rapidly and cost-effectively provide new, more capable assets to meet the government's needs in the defense and intelligence communities. We support the EnhancedView program and urge the Department and the Intelligence Community to sustain it as a critical complementary program in the nation's overhead architecture.

Sincerely,



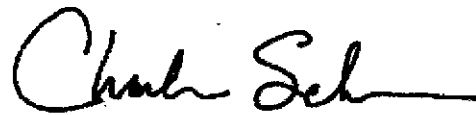
Senator Mark Udall



Senator Mark R. Warner



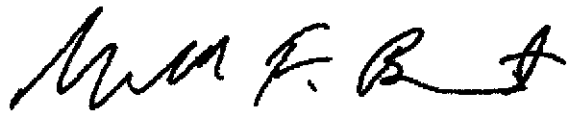
Senator Roy Blunt



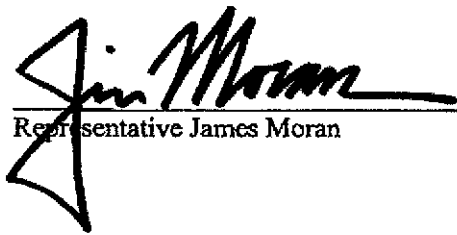
Senator Charles E. Schumer



Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand



Senator Michael F. Bennet



Representative James Moran




Representative Cory Gardner

  
Representative Doug Lamborn

  
Representative Mike Coffman

  
Representative Ed Perlmutter

  
Representative Tom Reed NY29

MIKE COFFMAN  
8TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
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CHAIRMAN

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0606**

November 30, 2011

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The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

I am writing with concern regarding the politics surrounding our strained national security relationship with Pakistan, and to assure you that I support your Department's impartial investigation into the events of November 26, 2011.

Media reports highlight a coalition strike on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan that allegedly left 24 Pakistani soldiers dead. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, appropriately and respectfully acknowledged this loss of life, but did not offer an apology on behalf of the U.S. government before a full investigation into this matter is conducted. In the course of this investigation, I urge you to continue this approach and support a thorough and impartial examination into the circumstances that precipitated this event and the risk that our military service members face in their duty in this volatile region.

Our relationship with Pakistan is of strategic importance to our national security. There are many examples of successful coordination with Pakistani authorities during the Global War on Terror when our counter terror efforts were greatly bolstered by their assistance. Notwithstanding, many in Congress are concerned that our security efforts and those of the Government of Pakistan are often divergent at best. This is evident in the apparent sanctuary that Osama bin Laden had in Abbottabad, Pakistan before U.S. Special Operations Forces brought him to justice this May, as well as numerous other instances of possible Pakistani complicity in the operations of the Haqqani Network and other associated enemy forces. The investigation into events on November 26, 2011 should acknowledge our important relationship



with Pakistan, but it must also not turn a blind eye towards actions of the Pakistani military that may have triggered or contributed to the incident.

When our nation sends young men and women to war, these brave service members must have the highest assurances that they will be adequately supported in their mission. The Rules of Engagement that our military forces are subject to while conducting operations in Afghanistan clearly state that our personnel have an "inherent right to self-defense." If our troops stationed along the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan come under attack, then it should come as no surprise that they defend themselves with military force, as their Rules of Engagement guarantee. As you oversee this important investigation, I urge you to consider the perspective of our troops on the border who cannot shield themselves with the type of political or diplomatic maneuvering employed in Washington and Islamabad. For these Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, the cost of failure or indecision is their lives.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
6TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

1222 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-7882

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

BALANCED BUDGET  
AMENDMENT CAUCUS  
CHAIRMAN

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0606

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
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SUITE 220  
LONE TREE, CO 80124  
(720) 283-9772

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

I write out of solemn concern for the treatment of the remains of fallen service members at Dover Air Force Base. I fully support your efforts for a thorough investigation into this matter and urge you to hold those accountable for the disrespectful mistreatment of the remains of fallen service members to the fullest extent possible, to include criminal prosecution under public law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Our nation should never again have to hear a story of a fallen service member's remains being disrespected here in the United States.

As the administration at Arlington National Cemetery works hard to redress years of neglect that led to misidentified grave sites, improper record keeping, and unnecessary hardship to the families of our fallen service members, it is shocking to me that we must also conduct a similar investigation at Dover Air Force Base.

Dover Air Force base is the port of entry for the vast majority of the remains of fallen American service members returning to the United States for burial. A few weeks ago, the House Armed Services Committee heard testimony from senior Air Force leaders regarding their actions to identify and correct mistreatment of service members' remains at Dover Air Force Base. Recent media reports outline far more dire circumstances of disrespectful treatment at Dover. The reports allege that the cremated partial remains of over 274 fallen service members were buried in a county landfill without the expressed permission of the service members' families.

Although the management at Dover Air Force Base reportedly put an end to the practice of interring remains of our fallen heroes in landfills in 2008, I know you share my concern that this was ever the case. There is simply no excuse for this and I urge you punish any personnel who may have been responsible for this practice to the full extent of your abilities.

OSD 14726-11



The men and women who serve as our nation's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines have few assurances when they deploy to combat to defend our nation. They do not even have the assurance that they will return to the United States alive. One of the few assurances they do have is that if they make the ultimate sacrifice and lay down their lives in the line of duty, then their remains will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect of a grateful nation. As a Marine Corps combat veteran and member of the House Armed Services Committee, I believe this is not only a legal requirement, but also our moral obligation.

I believe the only way to ensure that the remains of fallen service members are never again disrespected is to levy the strongest possible punishments against those who may have been responsible for it. The leadership of this nation must send a message that the disrespectful treatment of fallen service members is utterly unacceptable will not be tolerated under any circumstance.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and highest priority matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Coffman  
United States Congress

MIKE COFFMAN  
8TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
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BALANCED BUDGET  
AMENDMENT CAUCUS  
CHAIRMAN

January 5, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

While watching the results of the Iowa Caucus I was shocked and appalled to see a uniformed member of the United States Army, Cpl Jesse Thorson, blatantly disregard Department of Defense policies (contained in DOD directive 1344.10) regarding the conduct of active duty members' participation in partisan political campaigns.

This soldier's activities not merely skirted the margins of what is acceptable behavior, but demonstrated either a complete contempt for the standing policy or an unconscionable ignorance of it. I appreciate the Department's swift launch of an investigation into this matter. Despite these efforts, however, the damage of his actions cannot be undone, and the problem is likely broader than the actions of a single individual.

I believe the existing regulations are appropriate policies that clearly express the intent of the Department of Defense; however I see a grave failure in leadership in the chain of command's ability to communicate and enforce them.

I request that you publish a directive to review and reinforce what the regulations are, and issue a warning to the respective service chiefs to ensure that this type of activity does not occur in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Mike Coffman  
United States Congress

