BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 3, 2005

Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I know you have been hearing from community leaders across the country and from my congressional colleagues about how the campaign against terror has stretched the resources of our military and is affecting our troops and their families in ways not previously anticipated. I appreciate that you and your advisors are continually assessing these concerns, and, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations and Veterans Affairs Committees, I look forward to participating in that evaluation process.

You should be aware that not a day goes by that I do not receive a letter, a phone call or an e-mail from someone in my state asking about the status of their loved ones who have been called to active duty. Over the last several weeks, a number of friends and family members of Illinois National Guard units, two of which are currently at Fort Polk, Louisiana, have contacted me to express their concern that our state's units are receiving conflicting signals about the length and location of their current deployment.

I am extremely concerned that despite the great sacrifices being made by these great Americans and their families, this Administration is still not giving the troops and their families the kinds of straight answers that will permit them to have some certainty about their deployments. Thus, I am writing you today to ask for specific information about the nature of the Illinois' 131st and 178th National Guard units' deployment, and to express my concern and frustration about the Pentagon's treatment of our National Guard and Reserve forces.

Guard members and Reservists are facing a period of unprecedented mobilization. As the military is stretched thin by duties in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, they are facing longer and less predictable mobilizations. And we have heard – including from very senior leadership in the Reserve and Guard structures -- that the Guard and Reserve are receiving substandard equipment and insufficient training to meet the challenges they confront on these deployments.

Moreover, when these troops are called to active duty, their families often face severe financial hardship as well as increased child care and health care costs. This problem is exacerbated by the uncertain lengths of deployment. Families cannot plan for their financial future without knowing when a Guard member or Reservist can return home and return to work.

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Our citizen-soldiers deserve better. They risk their lives for our safety. Their families risk financial ruin. The least we can do is let them know where they will be serving and when they are returning home.

I look forward to receiving detailed information about the Pentagon's plans for the Illinois' 131st and 178th National Guard units as well as an update of what the Pentagon is doing to improve long-term planning for the assignment of the Guard, the Reserve and members of the full-time military. While I understand the need to maintain sufficient troop strength in Iraq, I also believe our leaders need to be more honest about what will be expected of our National Guard and Reservists, as well as our Active Duty soldiers. I would like to let my constituents know that in this difficult time, our leaders have their interests at heart and recognize their deepest concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

CCs: The Honorable Francis J. Harvey
Secretary of the Army

Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum
Chief, National Guard Bureau

Brigadier General Randal E. Thomas
Adjutant General, Illinois National Guard

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2005 MAR 21 PM 2:27

March 15, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Mr. Moore,

My constituent, (b)(6), contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of the Army. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

OSD 05359-05

03/15/05 16:13 FAX 312 886 3514 SENATOR BARACK OBAMA 002

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2005 MAR 22 AM 9:13

March 21, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding my constituent's case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with my constituent and will apprise (b)(6) of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

OSD 05525-05

03/21/05 14:02 FAX 312 886 3514 SENATOR BARACK OBAMA 002/007

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 25, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore,

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

OSD 05862-05
BO-DLB

03/25/05 15:08 FAX 312 886 3514 SENATOR BARACK OBAMA 002/005

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2005 MAY 10 PM 3:04

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 08928-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

2005 MAY 1[illegible]

May 18, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 09517-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 09520-05

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 27, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-4000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We are deeply concerned that the Pentagon has failed to release the installation-specific data that it used to prepare its recommendations under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (as amended). The Department has proposed a list of military bases to close or realign, and has forwarded that list to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, Congress, and the Comptroller General for their review. Congress designed this process to be open and transparent. To that end, section 2903 (c) (4) of that Act provides that,

> "In addition to making **ALL** information used by the Secretary to prepare the recommendations under this subsection available to Congress (including any committee or member of Congress), the Secretary shall also make such information available to the Commission and the Comptroller General of the United States."(emphasis added)

While the Department has released both the overall report and recommendations, and the service-specific analysis and recommendations, it has not released the installation-specific data, which was the basis for the Department's analysis. Specifically, it has not released data indicating how military value scores for each installation were derived. In past BRAC rounds, such data has been released.

If the Department continues to delay the release of this data, communities adversely impacted by BRAC, and the BRAC commission, will be unable to assess the Department's recommendations in the limited time allotted to them under BRAC law. Communities affected by BRAC should know how their bases were measured so they can either support or challenge the proposals The first commission hearings are scheduled for Tuesday, June 7th, less than two weeks from now, and the commission must send its recommendations to the President no later than September 8th, 2005.

We urge you to release this data immediately to avoid undermining the BRAC process.

Sincerely,

Kit Bond

OSD 10116-05

05/26/2005 16:31 FAX 202 224 2417 KENNEDY 002

James Talent
United States Senator

John F. Kerry
United States Senator

Harry M. Reid
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator

Chris Dodd
United States Senator

Joseph R. Biden
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Herb Kohl
United States Senator

Russell Feingold
United States Senator

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

John Thune
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

John S. Corzine
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 16, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 11844-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 16, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) , contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 11900-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 15, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding her case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise her of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 14454-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 26, 2005

Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of a number of my constituents whose loved ones have made the ultimate sacrifice for our great country. I am sure that you grieve as I do for every fallen soldier, and I appreciate that the Department of Defense is continually assessing the ways in which the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are affecting our troops and their families.

In the wake of these tragedies, our government should be doing everything possible to support the family members of these heroes as they grieve. I commend the tremendous work of casualty specialists who provide that support. I appreciate how important their empathy and compassion are under these difficult circumstances.

For this reason, I am very distressed to hear from some of my constituents that their casualty specialists have been called to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan before their duties to the grieving families are complete. For a spouse or parent in the midst of planning a funeral and figuring out how they are going to provide for their families, having their casualty officer called to active duty makes their situation all the more difficult. When one of our soldiers gives his or her life in service of our country, we can and must do better by their families, and we must be consistent in the ways we assist them.

I am requesting that you provide information about the current process of assigning casualty specialists to the next of kin of fallen soldiers. I would like to be able to reassure my constituents that everything possible is being done to ensure that this important relationship is working as it should.

I sincerely hope that the Department of Defense is addressing this issue, and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

OSD 16809-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

2005 AUG 26 PM 3:40
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

August 24, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6), contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. David LeBreton, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact David at (312) 886-0828.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/dlb

OSD 17374-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2005 SEP 30 PM 2:39

August 31, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jenna Pilat, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jenna at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

BO/jp

OSD 19636-05

673115

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 31, 2005

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act clearly states that the number one criterion for BRAC decisions is military value. Unfortunately, the report that has been approved by the BRAC Commission failed to abide by that crucial standard. The set of recommendations approved by the Commission substantially deviates from the criteria established by law. As such, we urge you to return the report to the Commission for further revision.

Specifically, we write to you today about a set of recommendations involving Springfield's Capital Airport and Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois. As part of a larger vote involving Air National Guard facilities, the Commission elected to send the 15 F-16s of the Illinois Air Guard 183d Fighter Wing to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Capital Airport, home of the 183d, has a higher military value than Fort Wayne; this fact alone marks a deviation from BRAC criteria. In its evaluation, the Department of Defense alleged that the downgrading of military value would be justified by superior recruiting in Indiana. The evidence that members of the community and congressional delegation presented to the BRAC Commission clearly exposed the fallaciousness of this justification: the 183d enjoys outstanding recruiting in Illinois and is over 100 percent critically manned. Furthermore, as the U.S. District Court of Eastern Pennsylvania recently ruled, the Defense Department should have obtained the consent of the Governor before seeking to deactivate a flying wing.

Decisions involving Rock Island Arsenal also defy the central criterion of military value and the paramount objective of enhancing national security through the more effective allocation of military resources. The Defense Financial and Accounting Services at Rock Island was the top-ranked unit in the country. But the Commission decided to transfer this agency from Rock Island to a substantially inferior facility, according to Department of Defense data, while defending the retention of three lower-ranked sites, allegedly on the basis of enhanced military value combined with economic impact. Shutting down a top-ranked facility (which had ample physical room and local capacity to grow) while maintaining and expanding the 12th, 17th, and 19th ranked units flies in the face of all logic. Moreover, the economic impact of this move on the communities in and around Rock Island also outweighs the prospective impact at two of the three lower-ranked recipient sites. Similarly, the decision to move the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command from Rock Island to Michigan will fail to yield promised dividends: with projected costs exceeding $150 million, the Department of Defense will never see returns on this investment.

We believe that the report submitted to you by the Department of Defense is deeply flawed. The inconsistencies, contradictions, and outright violations of BRAC criteria outlined above demonstrate the need for further revision. In its current form, this is not a report that advances our national interest. We urge you to return it to the Commission to correct these and other fundamental errors.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 22, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense
For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

My constituent, (b)(6), contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding her case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Scott Hooks, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise her of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Scott at (312) 886-0826.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

230 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 886-3506

OSD 19090-05

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 28, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-4000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In the space of a few days, tens of thousands of National Guard and Reserve members were activated and deployed to the Gulf States to assist in rescue and recovery operations during and after Hurricane Katrina. While there are many questions that remain to be answered about the preparations for and response to that disaster, there is no question that every single state responded to the call for assistance in Louisiana and Mississippi and that the men and women of the National Guard demonstrated courage and fortitude in dangerous circumstances. Those circumstances included prolonged exposure in many cases to a potentially toxic environment. With petroleum products, heavy metals, household chemicals, biological contaminants, asbestos, pesticides, and materials from Superfund sites among a host of other toxic substances swirling in the flood waters, National Guard members, along with others, were likely exposed to a wide range of potential health hazards. Now, in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, these concerns are further reinforced.

We understand that there are some screening mechanisms in place. However, we request that the Department of Defense provide the resources and guidance to the States that will ensure that all National Guard and Reserve members who have deployed to operations following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita receive medical screenings at the conclusion of their deployment, including those who were on duty for less than 30 days, due to the nature of the potential health risk. At a minimum, such screening should document types of exposure experienced, injuries or illnesses incurred, and medical treatment received. Appropriate diagnostic testing should be conducted. Because of stressful and difficult conditions of service, these screenings should also address mental health needs. In all cases, service men and women should receive information on how to follow up on health issues that may emerge after they return home, and the Department of Defense should ensure that a reporting system is in place to detect any Katrina-related health problems that may arise in this population. Screenings will help detect and treat skin, respiratory, or other ailments and also help document possible service connections to symptoms and illnesses which may arise after National Guard members return home.

Too often in the past, the United States Government has fallen short of its obligations to those who have served our country by failing to acknowledge or address service-related health problems. Current law now requires pre- and post-deployment medical assessments for those service members deployed outside the United States, and we are pleased that the Department of Defense has recognized the need to extend that requirement to those working on Joint Task Force Katrina. As indicated, however, we believe it is important that such screenings include the thousands of National Guard and Reserve members who may be activated for under 30 days. Furthermore, a report by the Government Accountability Office indicated that a disturbingly

high percentage of Army and Air Force service members missed one or both of their overseas pre- and post-deployment health assessments. We hope and expect that record to improve for those serving abroad and for similar care to be extended to those serving in this tough mission here at home.

We are united in our commitment to help those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and our admiration for those who have answered the call for rescue and relief missions to help those stranded by the hurricanes and to assist in the recovery and rebuilding effort. It is imperative that they receive the proper health care needed as a result of their deployment. Recognizing that the health repercussions of this service may not be immediately apparent, we regard the collection of data and instructions on where to go for follow-up examinations or assistance as vitally important. Thank you for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 29, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department Of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office from my constituent, (b)(6) (b)(6) Attached you will find him letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of his issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at (312) 886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

OSD 20632-05

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 19, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We are writing to express our concern about the lack of political balance in talk radio programming on the Department of Defense's (DoD) American Forces Network and to request a definitive timeline by which we can expect DoD to correct this imbalance.

More than a year ago, the Senate unanimously adopted a resolution offered by Senator Harkin expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Defense should ensure full implementation of the American Forces Radio and Television Service goal of maintaining equal opportunity balance with respect to political programming.

AFN Radio carries the shows of a wide range of conservatives, including Rush Limbaugh, Dr. Laura Schlesinger, and James Dobson, to the near total exclusion of progressive talk radio hosts. This is in violation of DoD's own guidelines on political programming on the American Forces Network, specifically, DoD Directive 5120.20R, which calls for political programming on American Forces Network that is "characterized by its fairness and balance," as well as news programming guided by a "principle of fairness" that requires "reasonable opportunities for the presentation of conflicting views on important controversial public issues."

On September 29, 2005, Manny Levy, Chief of the Radio Division of the American Forces Network Broadcast Center, formally advised the syndicate that distributes "The Ed Schultz Show" that AFN Radio would "begin carrying the first hour of 'The Ed Schultz Show' each day, beginning Monday, October 17, 2005 at noon PT/3 ET." However, higher-level DoD officials subsequently backtracked on this commitment. A Pentagon spokesman said that Mr. Levy "got ahead of the process," and that no decision had been made in a review of which programming to add to the network.

Inclusion of "The Ed Schultz Show" would have been a first, partial step toward achieving balance in political programming on AFN Radio. Even that first step has been abruptly canceled. Why, more than a year since the Senate passed its resolution, has DoD not implemented any program changes to balance political programming? At this late date, why is DoD still in violation of its own guidelines for political programming on AFN Radio? Given the time that has passed since this issue was brought to the attention of DoD by the Senate, the problem is not that Mr. Levy was "ahead of the process." The problem is that DoD is woefully behind in addressing this imbalance and coming into full compliance with its own guidelines and procedures.

OSD 21436-05

We request that you provide us with an action plan and timeline for achieving greater political balance in AFN Radio programming as quickly as possible. We respectfully request that you respond to this letter by November 1, 2005.

Sincerely,

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator

Mark Dayton
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Daniel Akaka
United States Senator

Christopher Dodd
United States Senator

Edward Kennedy
United States Senator

Russell Feingold
United States Senator

John Kerry
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

2005 12:49

October 26, 2005

Hon. Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary of Defense For Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Moore:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office from my constituent, (b)(6) (b)(6) Attached you will find his letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of his issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at (312) 886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

Office of U.S. Senator Barack Obama
230 S. Dearborn St., Suite 3900
Chicago, IL 60604

BO/sh

OSD 21271-05

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
October 27, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We are writing to urge you to ensure that the next supplemental budget request for Iraq and Afghanistan includes a request for full funding of the Common Remotely Operated Weapons Station (CROWS) program. The Army has indicated a requirement for $206 million in FY06 supplemental funding to provide an additional 820 of these units to our men and women overseas, and to ramp up for future production. We believe this request should be supported by the Administration and included in the formal supplemental funding request to Congress. We further ask that you request full funding for this program in FY07 as a part of the DoD's regular budget.

A few months ago Senator Salazar received a letter from an Army Specialist serving in Iraq whose friend was killed by an IED. His letter reads as follows:

> Two days ago a good friend of mine was killed in action when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonated next to his Humvee. He was sitting in the gunner seat and pulling rear security. I have seen automated guns that can go on the top of these same Humvees. These guns are controlled from inside the vehicle. Why are these guns not on every Humvee?... The four people that were inside the vehicle were physically unharmed. If the answer is money, then I would really like to know how much my friend's life was worth.

With only a few systems deployed, CROWS is already saving lives of soldiers in Iraq today by moving soldiers out of the exposed gunner's seat and inside the protective shell of an up-armored Humvee. We understand that during the last two weeks of September three CROWS units were struck by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Despite damage to the Humvees, the three CROWS mounts remained operational to engage the enemy. More importantly, all 12 soldiers including the gunners were inside, protected by armor, and received only minor injuries.

Funding the CROWS program at the Army's requested amount of $206 million will provide our soldiers with roughly 820 of these impressive and life-saving systems. It is imperative for the safety of our soldiers that this program continue to move ahead with the utmost attention and support from your Department and from Congress.

We stand ready to work with you on this vitally important matter.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar
Senator Ken Salazar

Senator Richard Burr

Carl Levin
Senator Carl Levin

Senator Jon Kyl

OSD 21326-05

Senator Lincoln Chafee

Senator Jon Corzine

Senator Richard Durbin

Senator Russell Feingold

Senator Frank Lautenberg

Senator Barack Obama

Senator Jack Reed

Senator John D. Rockefeller

Senator Edward Kennedy

Senator Debbie Stabenow

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

SEC

2005 NOV -4 AM 11:30

November 3, 2005

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As you prepare your budget request for Fiscal Year 2007, we ask that you include funding which will fully equip the Army National Guard with combat equipment which has dual use by the States for domestic emergencies.

We also ask the administration to address the recommendations of the Government Accountability Office with respect to the need to improve National Guard equipment readiness and its integration into Army transformation initiatives.

The Army National Guard plays a crucial role in State response to domestic emergencies. The greatly diminished percentage of equipment on-hand in our Guard units carries with it the risk of not only denying these units the equipment needed to conduct good training for their combat mission but also leaves them with fewer tools to support State responses to natural disasters, terrorist incidents or other emergencies. While it is possible to shift equipment from State to State, it is clear that National Guard response will be faster if the needed equipment is available for training and closer to the point of need.

Specific items of National Guard equipment are of particular value for homeland security purposes. These include trucks of various sizes, communications equipment, night vision devices, engineer equipment and helicopters. Unfortunately, the National Guard has troubling shortages in all of these areas. Nationwide the Guard has only 2/3 of the Humvees, 3/4 of the radios, half of the night vision devices and 1/4 of the modern medium trucks it needs to be mission responsive. Moreover, due to combat wear and the operational need for returning units to leave some equipment behind in the combat zone, these shortages are getting worse.

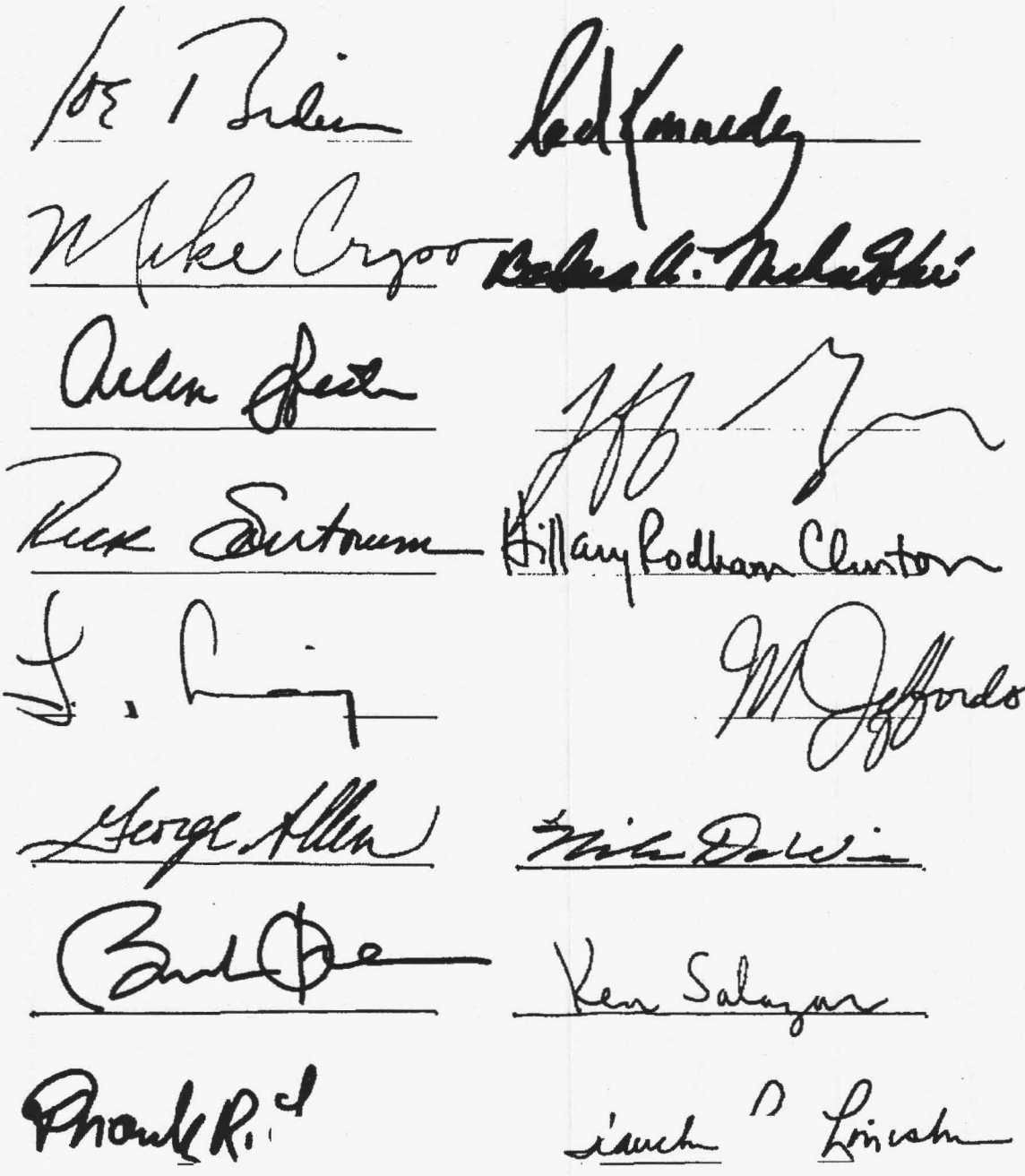
Please give full consideration to the homeland security value of National Guard equipment and include in your budget request a plan to bring our Guard up to 100% of key assets.

Dick Durbin

Kit Bond

Patrick Leahy

OSD 21800-05



Letter the Secretary Defense

Letter the Secretary of Defense

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 1, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I am writing to express my concern over reports of civilian casualties arising from the U.S. military's use of white phosphorus in Iraq, and to urge your office to thoroughly investigate these incidents.

I understand that while the United States is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), it has not ratified Protocol III of that convention, which regulates the use of incendiary weapons, such as white phosphorus. As a result, the United States has not agreed to ban the use of white phosphorus against military targets. Nonetheless, any use of white phosphorous – or any other incendiary weapon which ignites on exposure to oxygen and can burn human skin down to the bone if not extinguished – in an area with a large civilian population is deeply troubling.

Initially, the Department of Defense claimed that the white phosphorus was used only for illumination purposes, but the Department later admitted that in fact it was used to target insurgents in Fallujah. I do not question the honor and integrity of our brave men and women fighting in Iraq, but I am concerned that the use of such a weapon in a highly populated location like Fallujah may undermine a critical aspect of our mission there: winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

Allegations that white phosphorus may have resulted in the death or injury of civilians are serious, and I ask that your office make the investigation of this issue a priority, for the people of Iraq, for our soldiers, and for the American public.

I look forward to your response within the next ten days.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

OSD 24153-05

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1306

March 7, 2006

Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
c/o Legislative Affairs
The Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

A constituent of mine serving in Iraq has expressed concerns regarding a phone service contract and new charges for certain soft drinks. I have enclosed these concerns and ask that you respond to me.

Thank you in advance for your attention and prompt response on behalf of my constituent.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Enclosure

OSD 04483-06

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2006

The Honorable Daniel R. Stanley
Asstant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Assistant Secretary Stanley:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office from my constituent, (b)(6) (b)(6) Attached you will find her letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of the issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at 312-886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

BO/sh

OSD 04464-06

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4560

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 226-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5990
FAX (217) 492-5999

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2650

QUAD CITIES OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON DC 20510-1306

April 17, 2006

Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
Legislative Affairs
The Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

One of my constituents has contacted me to express her concerns that the military does not pay for soldiers to be transported to their homes once they reach their bases. I have enclosed her original correspondence and ask that you respond to her directly with any guidance you may be able to offer.

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Enclosure

OSD 06701-06
4/25/2006 3:43:48 PM

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2006

Mr. Daniel R. Stanley
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Mr. Stanley:

The enclosed correspondence was delivered to my Chicago District office. I have sent an acknowledgment to (b)(6), Village Administrator of Lake in the Hills, Illinois and have indicated that this matter would be referred to your attention.

I assured my constituent that you would give full consideration to his request in a timely manner. I would appreciate any additional information that would aid (b)(6). Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

BO/sh
Enclosure

OSD 08532-06
5/30/2006 11:26:03 AM

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713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5890
FAX (217) 492-5099

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701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

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MOLINE, IL 61265
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BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2006

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301-1300

Dear Mr. Wilkie:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office regarding E-J Industries, Inc. Attached you will find a letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of the issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at (312) 886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

BO/sh
Enclosure

OSD 13558-06

8/28/2006 1:46:18 PM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

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SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
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MOLINE, IL 61265
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BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 8, 2006

Mr. Robert Wilkie
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301-1300

Dear Mr. Wilkie:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office from my constituent, (b)(6). Attached you will find his letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of his issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at (312) 886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

BO/sh
Enclosure

OSD 13540-06
8/28/2006 10:03:38 AM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

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SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
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MARION, IL 62959
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1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2006

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We are writing concerning the ongoing study on the effects of wind energy projects on military readiness that the Department of Defense (DoD) is performing in response to Section 358 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (P.L. 109-163). The study was due no later than May 7, 2006, yet the Department has missed this deadline and no report, to date, has been released.

In March 2006, the DOD and Department of Homeland Security released an interim policy that resulted in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) issuance of "Notices of Presumed Hazard" to wind projects located within a radar line of site of the National Air Defense and Homeland Security Radars. Many of the projects that received these notices are located in the Midwest. Each day this report remains delinquent, these wind energy projects lose opportunities for new investment, and may not be able to meet deadlines for completion. Additionally, due to the limited number of companies with expertise in windmill farm construction, the delay involving current projects indirectly affects a large number of proposed projects. As a result, wind development has been halted in its tracks, with the threat of permanent derailment.

Although we eagerly await the findings of the DOD study, we are concerned that the study will report on interference from wind turbines on radar systems, but will not adequately examine effective mitigation opportunities. Therefore, we are concerned about the impact of the report on overall wind production.

We ask that you immediately expedite the completion of this report and that the report include a clear articulation of any conflict between the windmill farms and military radar installations. This is necessary to provide clarity for the industry and allow these companies to move forward with their projects. We also ask that you ensure the report meets the requirements of the National Defense Authorization Act by identifying any technologies that could mitigate any adverse effects on the military operations identified.

We understand that the nomination of Mr. Robert L. Wilkie to be Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs for the Department of Defense (DoD) is pending before the Senate. We have placed a "hold" on this nomination because of the Department's failure to meet the deadline for completion and release of the aforementioned congressionally mandated report.

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OSD 14080-06
9/8/2006 6:47:25 AM

We would appreciate your effort to release this long-awaited report prior to consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 25, 2006

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our strong support for the E-10 Technology Development Program and its critical Multi-Platform – Radar Technology Insertion Program (MP-RTIP). This large radar will provide unique capabilities in the Global War on Terrorism and against threats for decades to come. Congress has long supported Joint STARS operations and the information it provides to the warfighter. MP-RTIP will provide a quantum increase in capability over the current Joint STARS radar, and is required to increase our forces' ability to detect, track and identify ground moving targets, as well as providing a key link in cruise missile defense capability.

Congress has supported the development of the MP-RTIP radar with the commitment of over a billion dollars to date for the development of this vital program. We believe that it would be unwise for the Department of Defense to abandon this program after years of successful development, especially when DoD is on the verge of actually characterizing and demonstrating the radar's expected capability. Congress supports the plan to fly the large radar on an E-10, or on an E-8 as originally envisioned, thereby validating the significant investment in developing this critical technology.

We seek your assurance that the Department remains committed to fully fund this critical capability in the budget for fiscal year 2008 as stated in your recent Quadrennial Defense Review report that was submitted to Congress. The Department must continue to demonstrate and characterize the MP-RTIP radar and validate, via live flight, the capability to complete the kill chain against both air and ground moving targets.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
United States Senator

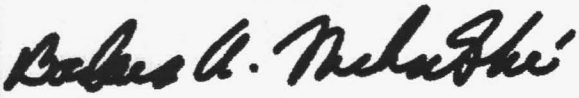
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
United States Senator

SAXBY CHAMBLISS
United States Senator

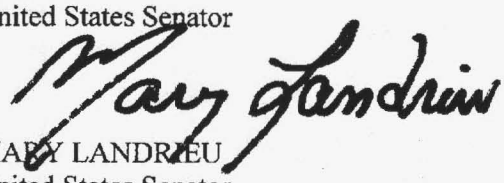
JOHNNY ISAKSON
United States Senator

OSD 15495-06
10/2/2006 2:40.02 PM

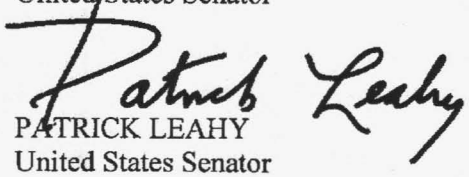
BILL NELSON
United States Senator



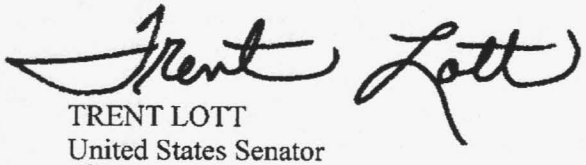
BARBARA MIKULSKI
United States Senator



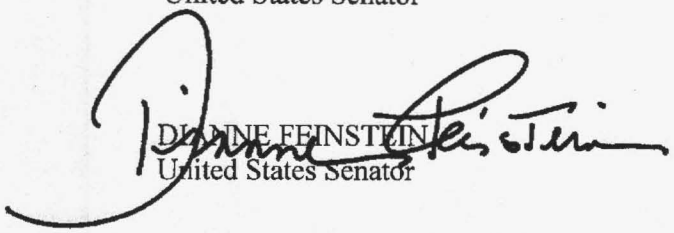
MARY LANDRIEU
United States Senator



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



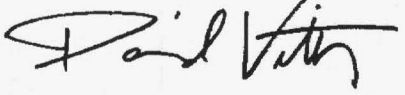
TRENT LOTT
United States Senator



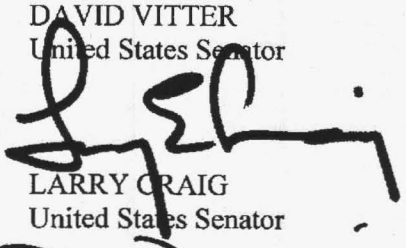
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

MEL MARTINEZ
United States Senator

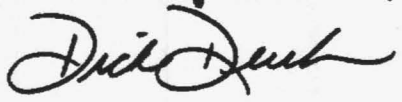
PAUL SARBANES
United States Senator



DAVID VITTER
United States Senator



LARRY CRAIG
United States Senator



RICHARD DURBIN
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

United States Department of Defense
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Hon. Robert Wilkie
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Hon. Robert Wilkie,

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his concern.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jamia Porter, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jamia at (217) 492-5089.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

607 East Adams St.
Suite 1520
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 492-5089

BO/-

OSD 15279-06

9/27/2006 1:55:32 PM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5093

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

MOLINE OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1232

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 3, 2006

Honorable Robert Wilkie
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301-1300

Dear Mr. Wilkie:

The enclosed correspondence was received in my Chicago office from my constituent, (b)(6) (b)(6) Attached you will find his letter which gives a more accurate description and explanation of his issues.

I would appreciate your looking into this matter at your earliest convenience. Please advise Scott Hooks, who assists me in these matters, of your findings.

If you require any further assistance or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Hooks at 312-886-3506.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Barack Obama
United States Senator

OSD 15788-06

10/6/2006 8:30:37 AM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 2900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 228-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5860
FAX (217) 492-5999

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

QUAD CITIES OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1239

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2007

United States Department of Defense
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Hon. Robert Wilkie
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Hon. Robert Wilkie,

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Defense. Enclosed you will find information surrounding his concern.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jamia Porter, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise him of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jamia at (217) 492-5089.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

607 East Adams St.
Suite 1520
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 492-5089

BO/jdl

OSD 02510-07

2/15/2007 3:53:54 PM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

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SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5890
FAX (217) 492-5099

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

QUAD CITIES OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

CLAIRE McCASKILL
MISSOURI

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 2, 2007

Hon. Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates,

We are writing to urge you to relieve from duty Lieutenant General (LTG) Kevin Kiley, the Army Surgeon General and Commander of Army Medical Command. LTG Kiley commanded Walter Reed Army Medical Center from June 2002 to September 2004 and has served as Army Surgeon General since that time. Both in his tenure as Commander at Walter Reed and as Army Surgeon General, LTG Kiley was aware of the unacceptable living conditions for outpatients and the lack of assistance for our nation's injured service men and women fighting the military medical bureaucracy. By all accounts and LTG Kiley's own words, it is clear that he failed to address these problems.

Under the command of then Major General Kiley, a culture of neglect and indifference to outpatient concerns developed at Walter Reed. LTG Kiley's recent statements indicate he is stubbornly continuing to propagate this command climate now as Army Surgeon General, even as senior Army and Department of Defense officials acknowledge the problems in the Army Medical Command. Simply stated, LTG Kiley does not get it. It is my belief that the dismissive command climate established by LTG Kiley is nothing short of a national disgrace and that a vital step in remedying the problem is his removal from command. We note that the removal of those subordinate to LTG Kiley eerily mirrors the embarrassment of Abu Ghraib when underlings were scapegoated to insulate those higher in the chain of command.

We are aware that Major General (MG) George Weightman, the head of Walter Reed, was relieved of his command at the facility. Yet MG Weightman commanded the facility for just seven months. LTG Kiley, on the other hand, established many of the procedures and policies that are in place at Walter Reed and has had continuous oversight of the facility since June of 2002. It is evident that LTG Kiley set the tone of indifference during his command at Walter Reed and allowed this tone to now spread through the full Army Medical Command.

We note in particular the contrast between MG Weightman's response to the recent series of *Washington Post* articles about Walter Reed and LTG Kiley's response. MG Weightman immediately and publicly took personal responsibility for the problems at Walter Reed. Meanwhile, his commander and predecessor, LTG Kiley, dismissed the problems outlined in the articles as minor. We know from your public statements, those of Secretary Gates and my own personal inspection of Walter Reed earlier this week that the problems are not minor.

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You also likely share our astonishment in reading of the experiences of (b)(6) wife of House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee member Rep. Bill Young. She recently described to the *Washington Post* ("Hospital Officials Knew of Neglect," March 1, 2007) her and her husband's repeated encounters with Kiley during his command at Walter Reed where they had raised concerns about what they had seen at the hospital. (b)(6) said of LTG Kiley, "He has skirted this stuff for five years and blamed everyone else."

LTG Kiley's own public statements following the *Washington Post* series also reveal serious problems in his command approach. LTG Kiley immediately suggested that the situation was blown out of proportion, stating to the media on a tour of Building 18 on February 22, 2007 that the problems "weren't serious and there weren't a lot of them." He also said that the problems were not "emblematic of a process of Walter Reed that has abandoned soldiers and their families."

In an appearance on February 21st on the *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, Kiley said, "We're not letting soldiers languish." He explained, "The issues ... have been about the quality of life, specifically some of the issues in Building 18, and then the bureaucracy." The next day LTG Kiley explained at a press conference that "while we have some issues here, this is not horrific, catastrophic failure." It is a catastrophic failure when disabled soldiers and their families are forced to endure months and often years of bureaucratic obstacles and injured men and women are living in housing infested with vermin with walls are covered in mold.

Lt. General Kiley must be held accountable. The nation owes our military men and women who have sacrificed for our country the very best in medical care, services and support, not a new fight with a Byzantine command climate and medical bureaucracy. That requires a senior commander who believes in establishing a command climate that demands and delivers the best, not a culture of neglect and indifference. The problems in the Army Medical Command have occurred both under LTG Kiley's command and *because* of LTG Kiley's command. One important step in fixing them is to terminate LTG Kiley's command.

We are hopeful that the Army will heed of the words of Vice Chief of Staff General Richard Cody when he called the problems "a breakdown in leadership." ("At Walter Reed, 'We're Going to Fix It,'" *Washington Post*, February 22, 2007). All indications are that the leader most responsible for these failures is LTG Kiley.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

CLAIRE MCCASKILL
Senator

BARACK OBAMA
Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 3, 2007

Honorable Robert Wilkie
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, District of Columbia 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

A group of Illinois constituents have expressed concern regarding a FOIA request for information on students at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. I would appreciate your careful review of this matter and direct correspondence to these constituents. I would also appreciate your forwarding me a copy of your letter.

Please find this constituent correspondence enclosed. Thank you for your prompt attention and response.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Enclosure

OSD 08235-07
5/15/2007 2:25:19 PM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5099

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

MOLINE OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

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BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I'm troubled by reports that our emergency response capabilities continue to be hampered because National Guard resources have been diverted overseas. The Guard provides our first defense against disasters that strike on our soil. In light of the tragic events in Greensburg, Kansas, I'm writing to ask you that the federal government ensure that the National Guard has the resources necessary to respond to disasters here at home.

In my home state of Illinois, the Air National Guard reports shortages of trucks, earth movers, and other equipment critical to emergency response. According to the Government Accountability Office, the Illinois National Guard only has 45.6% of its dual-use equipment on hand. That's under half of what we need to dam the Mississippi if it overflows. That's under half of what we need to respond to deadly tornadoes. That's under half of what we need to evacuate wounded civilians from an attack.

Our National Guard should never be overstretched to the point where we allow our homeland security and emergency response capabilities to erode. We must provide our troops with all of the resources they need to perform their missions overseas, but we must also ensure that civilians at home are protected from natural disasters and security threats.

Governor Sebelius was right to question the diversion of the Guard's resources and personnel overseas. There's no question that this has undercut our emergency preparedness and our homeland security. While the Emergency Management Assistance Compact allows states to cooperate in times of emergency, you know that during a disaster, time equals lives, and the extra time needed to mobilize outside assistance cannot compare with the effectiveness of having people and equipment positioned and ready to respond to a disaster. Your administration should make available all aid necessary to help the residents of Greensburg recover from the tragedy that leveled their homes. The National Governors Association has requested budget authority to reequip Army and Air National Guard units returning from overseas missions – and that authority should be granted.

We cannot afford to learn a lesson about unmet needs each time a disaster strikes. The National Guard is the essential mechanism through which states prepare for and respond to emergencies. If your administration chooses to divert state resources to assist the military overseas, this gap should be filled in order to protect Americans at home.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senate

Enclosure

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 22, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

In recent months, troubling allegations have surfaced at Ft. Carson, Colorado, suggesting that soldiers are not receiving adequate care for mental health problems incurred as a result of combat service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Specifically, soldiers have asserted that they are not receiving comprehensive treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and mental health issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They have also alleged that the command climate discourages soldiers from seeking help for these problems. As a result, we dispatched members of our staff to Ft. Carson last week to investigate these claims.

While Ft. Carson has taken some important steps to improve care for soldiers—including implementing mandatory TBI screening and enhancing the pre- and post-deployment screening process—the reality remains that the base is facing significant challenges in providing mental health care services. The Department of Defense Mental Health Task Force recently found that the stigma of mental illness and injury is pervasive across our Armed Forces—and Ft. Carson is proving to be no exception.

After meeting with soldiers as well as commanders at the base, our staff concluded that the stigma of mental illness is a significant barrier to care. They also determined there is a considerable lack of resources to adequately support the psychological needs of our service members and their families, and a lack of training and education regarding mental health problems for leaders from the division level to the unit level. These issues are severely impairing the ability of our Army and the Department of Defense to produce and maintain the best trained and equipped military fighting force in the world.

While visiting the base, our staff received a commitment from Major General Jeffrey Hammond, Commander 4th Infantry Division, that he will investigate claims of command intimidation and lack of access to timely mental health services. They also received his commitment to train military personnel on the mental health challenges many of our service members face.

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5/23/2007 2:26:23 PM

While we are pleased at this commitment, it is apparent that the challenges at Ft. Carson cannot be solved by General Hammond alone. Therefore, we urge you to ensure that Ft. Carson and every other military installation facing similar problems are given the resources and direction necessary to provide an optimal level of care for our service members. We will be following up with a more detailed staff report on Ft. Carson in the near future, and we expect the Department of Defense to immediately review those findings and take appropriate action to see that any and all problems are corrected.

Congress and the American people have made clear, especially following the revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, that substandard care for injured service members will not be tolerated. These men and women have stood up for our country, and we have no greater obligation than to stand with them and their families in their hours of greatest need.

Please respond as soon as possible to indicate your plans to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer

Barack Obama

Christopher S. Bond

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Joseph I. Lieberman

John F. Kerry

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

United States Department of Defense
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Hon. Robert Wilkie
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Hon. Robert Wilkie,

My constituent is concerned and would like to have a health and welfare check concerning the enclosed issue at Fort Victory.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jamia Porter, one of my staff members, is in contact with the constituent and will apprise them of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jamia at (217) 492-5089.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

607 East Adams St.
Suite 1520
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 492-5089

BO/pd

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6/13/2007 2:29:57 PM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5099

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

MOLINE OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

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HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 7, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am writing to request your recommendations for reforming a system of equipping Iraqi Security Forces that is clearly lacking in accountability.

According to a report recently released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the U.S. military cannot account for nearly 30 percent of the weapons that were given to Iraqi Security Forces through early 2007. Specifically, GAO reports that some 110,000 AK-47 assault rifles and 80,000 pistols are missing. Furthermore, GAO reports that the U.S. military had no system of accounting for these weapons in 2004 and 2005, when something as simple as a serial number could have provided an important tracking tool.

Given the importance of the train and equip program to the long-term prospects for peace and stability in Iraq, I am deeply troubled that this program seems to lack such basic oversight.

Because small-arms fire is a hallmark of this conflict, it is likely that these weapons are being used against our own brave men and women serving in Iraq. We also may be inadvertently providing arms to all sides of Iraq's civil war. Given the enormous amount of weapons missing, it is all too probable that groups like Sunni Arab insurgents, Shiite militias with ties to the Iranian government, and common criminals have been using weapons that were bought and paid for by the American taxpayer.

With this letter, I am requesting a detailed explanation of the accountability measures in place to ensure that our weapons are not falling in the wrong hands, your assessment of those accountability measures, and your recommendations for reforming a system that has clearly been inadequate. For roughly four years we have been trying to train and equip competent Iraqi Security Forces; it is past time that we got this right.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

OSD 13213-07
8/15/2007 2:53:58 PM

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing with regard to an incident in Baghdad earlier this week involving the State Department's security escort, which is made up of armed private contractors from the Blackwater firm. During a firefight last weekend, Blackwater security contractors killed 8 people and wounded 14 others.

This incident, which is under investigation at the Department of State, raises larger questions about the role of private security contractors. An estimated 48,000 private security employees are operating in Iraq, and more than 1,000 contractors have died in Iraq since 2003. As last weekend's incident illustrates, little is known about what functions these security contractors are performing, how much their services are costing, what military and safety equipment they are provided, and what rules of engagement they are following.

For that reason, in February, I introduced the Transparency and Accountability in Military and Security Contracting Act (S. 674). The bill would require federal agencies to report to Congress on: the total number of security contractors; the total cost of the contractors; the number of contractors killed or wounded; information about the military and safety equipment provided to contractors; and a description of disciplinary action taken against contractors. The bill would improve coordination between security contractors and U.S. armed forces by requiring the issuance of rules of engagement, clarify the legal status of contractors, and require investigation of criminal misconduct engaged in by contractors.

In an effort to learn more about Blackwater's operations in Iraq, I am interested in getting your reaction to several issues under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense.

1) The press has reported several other instances involving Blackwater, including a reported shooting of the Iraqi Vice President's security guard, reported shootings of Interior Ministry employees, and reported armed standoffs between Blackwater employees and Iraqi police. Has the Pentagon investigated these or other incidents? If yes, what were the results of those investigations?

2) Last year, Congress enacted and the President signed into law a provision stating that contractors operating in contingency operations would potentially fall under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Is it your view that any illegal actions by private security

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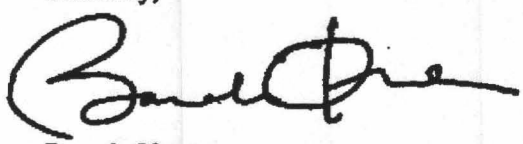
contractors in Iraq would be punishable under the UCMJ? If not, under what legal process would they be held accountable?

3) More than 13,000 private security contractors have been reported wounded in Iraq and reports suggest that many suffer from the same challenges that many of our soldiers, including post-traumatic stress disorder, once they return home. What steps are their contracting firms taking to ensure long term care for employees that require it?

4) Lastly, I am concerned about the impact of this incident – and similar incidents – on our overall effort to end the war in Iraq. Has the Department of Defense conducted an analysis of the consequences of turning over such armed functions in a war zone to contractors outside the chain of command, and whether this outsourcing is actually hurting, rather than helping, our counter-insurgency efforts, especially in winning local hearts and minds?

I look forward to your prompt responses to these questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

As you know, in many cases, members of the National Guard and Reserves are required to serve for 730 days in order to receive the level of educational benefits afforded to their active duty counterparts. However, according to recent news accounts, a number of returning service members have discovered that they will not receive these benefits either because they served a few days less than 730 days, or because their service orders were issued for a few days less than 730 days.

I believe that these members of the National Guard and Reserves are being unfairly treated, and I ask that you review the prevalence of such cases, exercise some flexibility and, where appropriate, grant waivers from this service requirement for educational benefits. I am particularly interested to receive from the Department an accounting of orders issued to Illinois members serving in the Guard and Reserves to determine whether any have fallen into this same predicament.

This problem is just one challenge presented by the complexity of the current maze of educational benefits and the varying eligibility requirements facing our returning service members. Even as Congress works to update these benefits, slash red tape, and ensure fairness and equity for our service members, I would ask that you respond to these interim questions:

- What statutory authority, if any, does the Department of Defense currently have to provide waivers for those cases in which members of the Guard or Reserves have fulfilled their commitment to serve our nation but have fallen short of receiving benefits that are due to their active duty counterparts?

- What plans are underway to review orders issued since 9/11 to Guard members and Reservists in other states, including Illinois, to determine how widespread this problem is, and does the Pentagon plan to provide waivers for these cases? If so, what would be the military's threshold for time served in order to grant the more generous educational benefit to members of the Guard and Reserves until the law can be revised?

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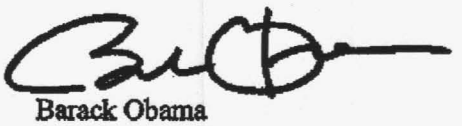
- What legislative changes would the Department recommend to correct the inequities in the eligibility criteria for educational benefits for our service members? For example, would the Department support revising the applicable statute so that our members of the National Guard and Reserves could use their educational benefits upon separation, as their active duty counterparts can?

While there are different views of the war in our country, I know there is no disagreement about the tremendous sacrifice being made by the men and women who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have performed valiantly under exceedingly difficult circumstances. They have done everything that we have asked of them. And at a minimum, we owe them educational benefits that are accessible and commensurate with their noble service.

For that reason, I ask that you review the prevalence of cases of Guard and Reserve members who have fallen a few days short of receiving the educational benefits they deserve, exercise some degree of flexibility in addressing these cases and, wherever appropriate, I ask that you grant waivers from this service requirement. Thank you for your consideration to this request.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 23, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

We are writing to request a full accounting from the Department of Defense on the number of psychological injuries sustained by service members since October 2001 and how the military reports on and invests in treating these less visible psychological injuries. Recent media accounts indicate that the number of service members seeking care for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the Veterans Administration (VA) jumped 70% over a 12-month period, or an increase of some 20,000 cases. In addition, reports of the total number of cases of PTSD treatment at the VA since 2001 – 50,000 cases – far exceed the number of wounded documented by the Pentagon.

While the literature suggests that symptoms of psychological injuries such as PTSD often surface after the initial trauma, these reported numbers not only underscore the increase in demand for mental health resources among our veterans, but suggest that many of our brave active duty service members are sustaining less visible psychological injuries at a time when the military faces a severe shortage of behavioral health personnel. As a result, many of our warriors may lack access to care just at a time when early treatment could be beneficial. In light of the fact that mental health care is now the second largest area of VA treatment sought by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, it is incumbent on the military to ensure it is providing adequate treatment before our warriors ever separate from service. Especially in combat theaters, where recent reports also suggest a spike in suicides, we must ensure service members facing the stress of combat operations have access to resources and care for psychological injuries.

For these reasons, we ask that you provide the following information:

- What is the total number of cases of PTSD among active duty service members documented by each military department since October 2001? Please distinguish between those cases that were diagnosed in and out of a combat theater. Is this number reported in the Pentagon's regular compilation of wounded/injured figures, whether or not cases require a medical evacuation? Of this number, how many received treatment from a mental health professional?

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- What is the total number of other reported psychological injuries documented by each military department since October 2001? Please distinguish between those cases that were diagnosed in and out of a combat theater. Is this number reported in the Pentagon's regular compilation of wounded/injured figures, whether or not cases require a medical evacuation? Of this number, how many received treatment from a mental health professional?

- What procedures and referral mechanisms are in place in each military department for a service member who may want to seek counseling in a combat theater? How are service members currently trained to identify symptoms of combat stress?

- What is the approximate number of mental health staff, differentiated by specialty, deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, by calendar quarter and military department, since October 2001? Of this number, on average how many are embedded with units in forward operating areas?

- What is the number of mental health staff, differentiated by specialty, for each major mobilization and demobilization Army and Marine Corps site? Please provide the number of military personnel assigned to each of these installations.

- What incentives are in place, or being considered, to attract additional behavioral health specialists, differentiated by specialty?

- For Fiscal Year 2002 through 2007, what has been the total annual expenditure, by quarter and military department, on mental health care for active duty service members? Of these totals, how much was expended for staffing, both for military personnel and private contractors?

Caring for the mental health of our service members should be as important as caring for their physical wounds. Thank you for providing this information to our offices by November 13, 2007.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Christopher S. Bond
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 19, 2007

Honorable Robert Wilkie
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Honorable Wilkie,

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with the Department of Labor. Enclosed you will find information surrounding her case.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jamia Porter, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise her of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jamia at (217) 492-5089.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

607 East Adams, Suite 1520
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 492-5089

BO/lrs

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5099

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701 NORTH C
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FAX (618)

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BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

United States Department of Defense
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Hon. Robert Wilkie
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Hon. Robert Wilkie,

My constituent, (b)(6) contacted my office concerning an issue with her family now serving in Iraq. Enclosed you will find information surrounding her concern.

Your assistance in addressing this matter is greatly appreciated. Jamia Porter, one of my staff members, is in contact with (b)(6) and will apprise her of your findings. If you have any questions surrounding this matter or require further information, please contact Jamia at (217) 492-5089.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

607 East Adams St.
Suite 1520
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 492-5089

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12/3/2007 10:11:09 AM

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5099

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

MOLINE OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 14, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

We are concerned over reports that members of our Armed Forces with underlying mental health conditions are not receiving balanced, fair, and impartial reviews when facing judicial punishment and administrative discharge for engaging in misconduct that could be related to their conditions.

We understand and support the necessity of maintaining good order and discipline in the military. At the same time, we are concerned that the decision to prosecute a service member with serious mental health issues may, in some cases, be carried out without appropriate consideration of recommendations made by uniformed mental health providers. As such, we ask you to promptly review guidelines for the administrative handling of such complex cases.

On December 2, 2007, *The Washington Post* ran a story entitled "A Soldier's Officer" that clearly illustrates our concerns. The piece details the ordeal of Army First Lieutenant Elizabeth Whiteside, who according to available reports, served honorably at both Water Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and in Iraq before experiencing severe mental health symptoms and attempting suicide. During her apparent suicide attempt, Lt. Whiteside threatened a number of her fellow service members, and as a result, we understand the Army is currently deciding whether to pursue a court-martial against her.

What we find particularly troubling about this case is that military commanders with no medical training derided the documented medical opinions as to Lt. Whiteside's mental condition and their bearing on the case. Colonel Terrence J. McKenrick, commander of the Warrior Transition Brigade at Walter Reed, charged that even though medical professionals had determined Lt. Whiteside had a "severe mental disease or defect, she knowingly assaulted and threatened others and injured herself." Another commander wrote that Lt. Whiteside's "defense that she suffers from a mental disease excusing her actions is just that...an excuse; an excuse to distract from choices and decisions made by Lt. Whiteside." These statements are contrary to the apparent recommendations of Lt. Whiteside's battalion commander in Iraq that disciplinary actions not be taken, and show a callous disregard for the diagnosis of qualified psychiatrists at WRAMC, who found that Lt. Whiteside suffered from a "severe major depressive disorder and a personality disorder" and "disassociation with reality."

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We believe that service members should be held accountable for their actions, and we recognize that the Manual for Courts-Martial provides procedures for handling mental health issues in judicial proceedings. However, this case highlights the need for the Department to review its administrative procedures and training programs to ensure that commanders give full and fair consideration of the recommendations made by trained mental health providers *before* initiating disciplinary actions against soldiers suffering from mental diseases.

Additionally, as Senators who have worked extensively to improve mental health care services for our armed forces, we find it unacceptable that officers with no medical training—who are required by law to protect the impartiality of the military justice process—would make dismissive statements regarding Lt. Whiteside's mental health condition. These comments only undermine respect for the mental health profession and increase the stigma associated with seeking mental health care.

According to the Congressionally-mandated report of the Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, "every military leader bears responsibility for addressing stigma; leaders who fail to do so reduce the effectiveness of the service members they lead." The Department is best served by ending policies that discriminate against service-members who suffer from mental health problems and working to eliminate the stigma that prevents too many from seeking care. That is why we strongly urge you to ensure that the recommendations of qualified medical professionals play a clearly defined and important role in proceedings to discharge or punish any service member with an underlying mental health condition.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Christopher S. Bond
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

John F. Kerry
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 11, 2008

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-1400

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am deeply troubled by news reports that Blackwater Worldwide dispersed CS gas, a riot control substance, in an intersection populated by U.S. military personnel and Iraqi civilians in 2005.

Press reports indicate the CS gas was dispersed by both a helicopter and an armored vehicle and that it temporarily blinded drivers, pedestrians, and at least 10 American soldiers operating the checkpoint. U.S. military personnel reportedly said that there were no signs of gunfire or other forms of violence at the checkpoint at the time the riot control agent was dispersed.

The seriousness of this incident, which appears to be part of a pattern of misconduct by Blackwater over the last several years, emphasizes yet again the need to address serious questions about the role and oversight of contractors operating in Iraq and the extent to which their conduct could be jeopardizing our military's efforts to bring this war to a responsible end. Accordingly, I ask that you respond to the following questions:

1. Did the Department of Defense conduct an investigation of this incident, and if so, what were the results? Was Blackwater authorized to carry and use CS gas or any other riot control agent?

2. What are the rules of engagement governing the use of riot control agents in Iraq by U.S. military personnel and contractors? Who in the U.S. government can authorize the use of riot control agents in Iraq? How many times have they been used in Iraq by U.S. military personnel or contractors, and what were the circumstances?

3. What were the effects of the riot control agent, which can cause a severe burning sensation in the eyes, difficulty breathing, and in some cases nausea and vomiting, on U.S. military personnel and Iraqi civilians who were exposed in this incident?

OSD 00838-08

WASHINGTON OFFICE
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-2854
FAX (202) 228-4260

CHICAGO OFFICE
230 S. DEARBORN
SUITE 3900
CHICAGO, IL 60604
OFFICE (312) 886-3506
FAX (312) 886-3514

SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
607 EAST ADAMS
SUITE 1520
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
OFFICE (217) 492-5089
FAX (217) 492-5099

MARION OFFICE
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARION, IL 62959
OFFICE (618) 997-2402
FAX (618) 997-2850

MOLINE OFFICE
1911 52ND AVENUE
MOLINE, IL 61265
OFFICE (309) 736-1217
FAX (309) 736-1233

I look forward to your prompt responses to these questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

BARACK OBAMA
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2008

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-1400

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am troubled by news reports that the U.S. Army suppressed an unclassified study of the planning for postwar Iraq prepared by the RAND Corporation because it was critical of the White House, the Department of Defense, and other government agencies.

Press reports indicate RAND submitted an unclassified version of the report titled "Rebuilding Iraq" in 2005 in the hope that its publication would contribute to the public debate about how best to prepare for future conflicts. The RAND study reportedly concluded that the Administration miscalculated the requirements for reconstruction and that "there was never an attempt to develop a single national plan that integrated humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, governance, infrastructure development, and postwar security." It also reportedly concluded that poor planning had "the inadvertent effort of strengthening the insurgency" because of the lack of security and basic services for Iraqis.

The conclusions of this report emphasize yet again the need for transparency in the management of postwar efforts in Iraq to ensure that our current approach is not jeopardizing our military's efforts to bring this war to a responsible end. Accordingly, I ask that the Department of Defense provide a copy of the unclassified report prepared by the RAND Corporation on "Rebuilding Iraq" to Congress. If the unclassified report will not be provided to Congress, I ask that you provide a justification for this decision.

I look forward to your prompt response. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator

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