Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

27 September 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
The Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Suite 319
Washington DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

Since you announced your decision August 9 to recommend to the President to close the U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) as part of a series of initiatives designed to gain efficiencies in the Department of Defense, we have been alarmed at your lack of analytical rigor supporting your closure recommendation and the lack of transparency in disclosing what analysis you might have with Congress and the affected Defense Community.

To be clear, we are in strong support of aggressive, collaborative action to identify any inefficiency not just within the Department of Defense, but across the entire federal government, to ensure that all tax revenue is put to the greatest use and we commend your efforts to reduce overhead and to apply savings to force structure and modernization.

However, the failure to consult more fully with Congress in a transparent way works against the Department's ultimate goal of becoming more cost-conscious and efficient in providing for our nation's defense and erodes the credibility of the Department of Defense.

We are also concerned about the impact that the closure of JFCOM will have on the military's joint training, operations, concept development, and experimentation. JFCOM's focus on warfighters' joint capabilities, a function of growing importance as our military operates with coalition forces around the world, specifically with regard to readiness and interoperability, is critical. JFCOM's leadership in joint force and coalition training over the last decade has led to key advancements in the ability of all branches of our armed forces to deploy together more effectively for joint operations.

In the nearly two months since your announcement, we have sent multiple requests for substantiating information. While we acknowledge that representatives from

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

the Department of Defense were made available for a staff level brief, the information provided was of little relevance or use. There were no substantive, analytical data provided. Your continued refusal to provide any supporting information indicates that your philosophical decision was made without any analysis as would be expected of a closure of this magnitude. As a result, we have no information that allows us to quantify the possible effects of your proposal. We again request full disclosure of all pertinent documents and analysis supporting your decision to close JFCOM.

If the Department does not provide the requested information and documents prior to the scheduled hearings on this matter on 28-29 September, we will request that the Chairs of the committees of jurisdiction use every means available to compel the Department of Defense to provide the documents and information to Congress.

We appreciate you quick response and support of this request and look forward to further collaborative efforts to identify inefficiencies within the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,

J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Eric Cantor
Member of Congress

Frank Wolf
Member of Congress

Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress