



23 January 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid (NV)
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell (KY)
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

As March approaches the Department of Defense (DOD) is bracing for deep cuts that will affect the ability of our military to carry out its missions. Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter has directed his Department to, among other things, cancel all Air Force aircraft, Navy ship and Army ground vehicle maintenance not directly related to combat operations beginning as early as 15 February 2013. Therefore, the already lengthy backlog of aircraft, naval vessel and Army ground vehicle maintenance requirements will increase significantly, and the ability to train and prepare our military personnel for mission success will decrease.

With the expiration of the Continuing Resolution (CR) and uncertainty of funding the President's Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) budget request and the remaining FY13 DOD budget, many defense operations currently in progress will be left vulnerable, reducing the services' critical capabilities. While wartime funding, wounded warrior programs and military personnel accounts will not be subject to any of the cost saving cuts (before or after sequestration), wartime operations and personnel involved will undoubtedly be affected by myriad concerns, including delayed training and maintenance, as well as a lack of equipment and resources. With the expiration of the CR two months away and the debt-ceiling just a few weeks away, the time to act is now.

By having to operate under the previous year's budget, DOD is insufficiently funded. Its ability to achieve mission success and defend our nation going forward will be severely threatened if Congress does not address the many concerns that make March a 'Perfect Storm' of defense cuts. On behalf of members of the Air Force Association (AFA) Association of the United States Navy (AUSN) and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) we ask that you enact legislation that will allow our military forces to maintain their ability to successfully defend our nation.

Sincerely,

Gordon R. Sullivan, General, U.S. Army (Ret.)
President & CEO, AUSA

Casey Coane, RADM, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Executive Director, AUSN

George Muellner, Lt. Gen., U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board, AFA