



November 6, 2013

General Martin Dempsey
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Washington, DC 20318-0001

Admiral James Winnefeld
Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Washington, DC 20318-0001

Admiral Jonathan Greenert
Chief of Naval Operations
Washington, DC 20301

General James Amos
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Washington, DC 20301

General Raymond Odierno
Chief of Staff of the Army
Washington, DC 20310-0200

General Mark Welsh
Chief of Staff of the Air Force
Washington, DC 20330

General Frank Grass
Chief of the National Guard Bureau
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

On behalf of the companies and members of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the Air Force Association (AFA), the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), the Navy League, the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), and the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), we want to bring to your attention the very severe impacts that sequestration is having on the defense industry and our fighting forces that will get worse if it is allowed to continue.

As Christine Fox, the former Director of Cost Analysis and Performance Evaluation, said in a recent opinion piece in *Defense News*, “Pretending that the ongoing political stalemate that perpetuates the sequester is not harmful is the most harmful thing we can do.” Sequestration budget reductions are simply too steep to meet with just cuts to overhead and bureaucracy, which take years to produce savings and often cost money in the near-term. The only source of short-term savings is warfighting readiness and modernization, both of which impact the individual soldier, sailor, airman, and marine as well as the industrial base. In other words, sequester cuts deliver a military that is smaller and less ready than the one we need.

The impact on force structure is particularly stark. According to a recent report from the Bipartisan Policy Center, “The combination of sequester cuts to the topline coupled with unaddressed internal cost increases will erode force readiness, stall modernization, and reduce the fighting forces by at least 50% by 2021.” Sequester cuts are estimated to reduce our military from 13 ground divisions across the Army and Marine Corps to just nine, from 1,493 fighter jets to just 1,157, and from 285 warships to 235. The United States is headed toward the smallest

military in recent history, yet sequestration still does not leave enough funding to train and equip even the remaining force structure. These factors are largely invisible to the public until the military is called upon to respond to a contingency for which it is not ready. Sending under-trained and under-equipped troops into harm's way is something we know you don't support, and we pledge our support to try and ensure this does not happen.

The threat of sequester to defense industry is just as serious. Defense contractors cannot weather the sharp cuts mandated by sequestration, and they face the choice of exiting the government market or simply going out of business. The hollowing out of the defense industrial base is occurring and has already forced some large contractors to shut down production facilities employing thousands while many small businesses comprising our national supply chain are struggling to stay in business. A recently conducted AIA survey of the supply chain found that 88 percent of respondents have been affected by budget cuts in the past two years and 100 percent expect negative impacts from the budget cuts in the future. The United States cannot sustain the world's finest military without also sustaining the world's strongest and most innovative defense industrial base.

For the sake of our national security, we ask you to continue to educate the public and our political leaders about the grave effects of leaving sequestration in place.

Sincerely and respectfully,

General Gordon Sullivan
United States Army, Ret.
President
Association of the United States Army

General Craig McKinley
United States Air Force, Ret.
President
Air Force Association

Lt. General Lawrence P. Farrell Jr.
United States Air Force, Ret.
President and CEO
National Defense Industrial Association

Maj. General Gus Hargett
United States Army, Ret.
President
National Guard Association of the United States

The Honorable Sean O'Keefe
Chairman
National Defense Industrial Association

Ms. Marion Blakey
President
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Maj. General Arnold Punaro
United States Marine Corps, Ret.
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Captain Bruce Butler
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