

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE
ON INVESTIGATIONS

April 24, 2008

Hon. Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Gates,

I wanted you to be aware that on April 17th and again today I sent a letter to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne regarding the Department of Defense Inspector General report that outlines improprieties involved with the Air Force award of a \$50 million contract for Thunderbird Air Show Production Services (TAPS). I am deeply concerned with this matter and the apparent lack of corrective actions taken.

This morning, I spoke with Secretary Wynne by phone and remain concerned with the approach he has taken to this matter, including the level of importance he has assigned to holding those involved in the wrongdoing and those who established the climate that invited it accountable.

I have attached the two letters that I have sent to Secretary Wynne for your review. I know that you place stewardship of taxpayer funds among your highest priorities and, further, that you require accountability from those who misuse their influence on these matters. The more senior the leader, the higher the standard to which we must hold them. As you will note in my letters, I am particularly concerned with the actions of Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley and the dismissive and demoralizing message it sends to subordinates when there is a lack of disciplinary action taken against the most senior leaders who are involved in wrongdoing.

Given the levels to which this matter rises in the Department of Defense and your priorities, as well as my concerns with how Air Force leadership have handled the issue to date, I believe this matter deserves your personal attention. I look forward to discussing it with you further.

Sincerely,

CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2008

Hon. Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Wynne,

Thank you for speaking with me today regarding the Air Force's Thunderbird Air Show Production Services (TAPS) contract. I need to again reiterate my frustration with the extent of accountability for personnel involved in this matter. I also remain deeply concerned with whether or not we are sending the correct message to our military and civilian professionals regarding their behavior as it relates to contracting, leadership responsibility and fiscal stewardship. In light of our conversation, I do not believe that you have given this matter sufficient attention nor that your remedial actions, both substantively and as to personnel accountability, are adequate.

As you are aware, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee have formally asked the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) to reopen the investigation into the conduct of current and former senior Air Force officials. Specifically, Senator Levin and Senator McCain have asked that the IG review the conduct of current and former senior Air Force officials named in the report of investigation – including Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley – not only as to criminal conduct, but also for possible ethical violations and failures of leadership. However, provided the significant findings already identified, it is incomprehensible to me that no action has been taken to reprimand General Moseley or to evaluate his continued fitness to lead the Air Force. Further, I do not understand why Major General Stephen M. Goldfein has been permitted to continue to serve in his current capacity, given the serious findings made against him in the IG's investigation.

It is my sense that General Moseley's command authority has been compromised. The General's commitment to upholding the letter and the spirit of the law, his respect for subordinate commanders, and his devotion to properly managing tax dollars, let alone his ability to set appropriate priorities for Air Force spending during this time of warfare when budgets are extremely tight, are in direct question. Future investigations bring the potential only of more definitive and troubling findings, including criminal findings that will negatively reflect on the culture of his command and his ability to lead.

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Page 2

I would like to note, as I did when we spoke, that the message sent in the letter that you cosigned with General Moseley to Air Force leaders regarding senior leader responsibilities in ethics shows a degree of hypocrisy on General Moseley's behalf that is astonishing. The letter captures my very own sentiments on these issues, but it should have been sent direct to General Moseley, not have come from him.

Finally, it is perplexing to me that you believe that because the U.S. Attorney, in its very limited investigation into this matter, did not bring criminal charges against General Moseley that he is free and clear of any wrongdoing. I remind you of the higher standard to which we hold our military leaders—something you capture quite well in your letter on senior leader responsibilities in ethics—and of the need to review this matter for wrongdoing under the UCMJ and Joint Ethics Regulation, as well as for leadership failures. My understanding is that you have conducted no such extended review. The lack of findings by the DoD IG, either favorable or unfavorable to General Moseley, did not abrogate your responsibility to follow up on potential wrongdoing by General Moseley, particularly when the IG investigation clearly stopped short of adequate inquiry into General Moseley.

I look forward to your attention to this matter. Please know that I will be discussing this further with my colleagues and raising my concerns with Secretary Gates.

Sincerely,



CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator