

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2008

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

As you are well aware, the Department of Defense is considering several locations in the continental United States as headquarters for Africa Command (AFRICOM). Should the determination be made to relocate the headquarters from Stuttgart, Germany, we believe that Marietta, Georgia offers unparalleled advantages and is therefore the most strategic east coast location to house AFRICOM.

The base in Marietta has a substantial runway network, as well as rail infrastructure that connects it with the Port of Savannah — already a point of shipment for a significant amount of cargo bound for Africa. Further, given that the facilities in Marietta are presently shared by Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Naval Air Station Atlanta, the Georgia National Guard, and Lockheed Martin, they have long been a model for joint-ness within the Department of Defense, an important and unique characteristic given that AFRICOM will be a joint command and require coordination with many international partners and across numerous government agencies. With 52 acres of available property adjoining the base, any needed expansion of the facilities would also be possible.

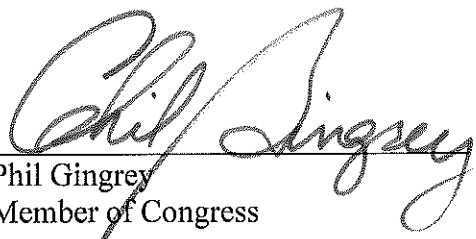
Moreover, the facility is located in a major metropolitan community, just north of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. As the world's busiest airport, this offers frequent and direct access to the continent of Africa. With one of the nation's highest concentrations of Fortune 500 companies and Non-Governmental Organizations, coupled with a very low cost of doing business, Atlanta and the Cobb County communities are uniquely qualified to accommodate additional consulates and businesses, as establishing such an important command may necessitate.

It is also worth pointing out that the Cobb County community is proudly patriotic: having actively and ardently supported Dobbins and NAS Atlanta for decades, the community would welcome the addition of AFRICOM. We therefore believe that the critical infrastructure advantages the facility offers, combined with the unique advantages of Cobb County, make this location the most qualified site for the headquarters in the United States.


Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your leadership of the Department of Defense. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you at any time. Please know that we share your commitment to ensuring

the success of our brave men and women in uniform, as well as the safety and security of the American people.

Sincerely,



Phil Gingrey
Member of Congress



Tom Price
Member of Congress