Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 17, 2015

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
1600 Army Pentagon – Room 3E560
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary McHugh:

We write to express concern with the Army's recent announcement of force structure cuts, which proposes to reduce its active duty ranks to 450,000 by the end of FY2017. We are also deeply troubled by the Army's surprising lack of transparency surrounding these decisions and the convoluted methodology that produced them. As you know, these cuts will detrimentally impact Fort Hood and Fort Bliss, the preeminent land power projection installations in the world, and reduce the combat power of the heavy forces that call these posts home.

These reductions are especially puzzling at a time in our history when Russia is once again the top threat to U.S. national security, as President Obama's nominees to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Army Chief of Staff both recently testified. In fact, it is common knowledge that the ground forces best suited to counter the Russian threat are heavy forces, and Fort Hood and Bliss serve as home to five of the Army's nine armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs), units which are themselves shrinking under the Army's latest proposed force structure announcement. It is unclear how reducing the combat power of the ABCTs will help achieve one of the primary missions of the U.S. Armed Forces laid out in the President's Defense Strategic Guidance – to "deter and defeat aggression" – especially in the face of unfettered Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

In addition, we question the objectivity and impartiality of the process that produced these results. We are quite surprised that the Army's planned reductions for Fort Bliss and Fort Hood, which were ranked respectively first and third in military value during the last round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), are so much higher than the average. For the ten U.S. posts that are home to Division or Corps headquarters, the average reduction under the announced plan is about 1,018 soldiers. In the case of Fort Hood, its cut of 3,350 soldiers is more than three times the average. At other Division headquarters installations, the planned cut is drastically lower. For example, those Army posts that ranked 14th and 15th for military value during the last BRAC round are being reduced, by percentage, only 1% and 0.2%, respectively, while Fort Hood takes a 9% cut and Fort Bliss takes a 5% cut. This is perplexing, and it raises questions as to whether the process has been tainted by a bias against installations in the State of Texas and favoritism toward other posts.

Our doubts are compounded by the counterproductive approach the Army has taken in informing Congress of these reductions. Our staffs have received several briefings from the Army, but we have yet to hear a satisfactory explanation as to why Fort Hood and Fort Bliss received such

deep cuts while installations that nearly all rank lower in military value fared much better. Some of our questions and requests for supporting documentation have been outright refused by the Army, which raises serious questions about the Army's process. Any suggestion that a member of Congress needs to invoke the Freedom of Information Act in order to learn the full analytical underpinnings of these decisions is inappropriate and fails to recognize Congress' important oversight role. Without transparency and good faith, the Army's methodology and overall process in determining these force structure cuts lack credibility. Therefore, we ask you to furnish an installation-by-installation breakdown of Army force structure changes, including summaries of additions and reductions at each U.S. post, which include details that our staffs have requested multiple times since the announcement.

For both the warfighter and the taxpayer, the worst aspect of these cuts to Fort Hood and Fort Bliss is that they will prevent the nation from fully leveraging the significant benefits of these unique, world-class posts. From cost-effectiveness to exceptional maneuver and gunnery ranges, these installations are national assets. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator

TED CRUZ
Member of Congress

JOHN CARTER
Member of Congress

KAY GRANGER
Member of Congress

ROGER WILLIAMS
Member of Congress