



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

NOV 29 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
H-209, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader McConnell:

The Department of Defense (DoD), along with most of the rest of the federal government, is currently operating under a continuing resolution (CR). As I've said many times in the past, continuing resolutions are not an efficient way to run the Pentagon. It appears that Congress will choose to extend the current CR into the next year. I urge Congress to keep the CR as short as possible and finish full-year appropriations.

I am particularly troubled by information that Congress may be considering a CR through May. A short-term CR is bad enough, but a CR through May means DoD would have to operate under its constraints for two-thirds of the fiscal year. This is unprecedented and unacceptable, especially when we have so many troops operating in harm's way. I strongly urge Congress to reject this approach.

The longer the duration of a continuing resolution, the more harm to DoD programs and capabilities, and thus, the more harm to our national security. DoD is tasked with acting in real time to defend our interests in a rapidly changing global security environment, but under a CR we are locked into last year's budget with last year's priorities. The most problematic shortfalls DoD will face in a long-term CR are in the operations and munitions accounts that fund counterterrorism operations and assistance in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, among other priorities. Moreover, the European Reassurance Initiative, poised for a quadrupling in FY17, would be hamstrung at FY16 levels. These are areas we cannot afford to short-change.

In addition, a CR denies DoD the authority to start new programs, increase production rates, or initiate multi-year procurement, each of which are critical to securing the capabilities and capacity to execute the national defense strategy. In FY17 alone we need 57 new starts and 86 production increases, all of which would be delayed for the duration of a CR. As a result, the CR would undermine critical programs such as the KC-46 Tanker, Apache and Blackhawk helicopter procurements, and the Ohio Replacement submarine. Failure to continue these programs as planned will cost the taxpayer hundreds of millions of dollars in needless contractual penalties.

This is an unprecedented situation. We have never been governed by a continuing resolution during a Presidential Transition, nor have we had a CR for DoD that went as late as May. On



behalf of the men and women who are working to manage this institution under extraordinary circumstances, I urge you to come together and limit the duration of any CR.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ash Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

cc:

The Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives