



Iowa



Washington

March 5, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Panetta:

We appreciate your participation and that of the Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force and the Army in the February 27 Council of Governor's (Council) meeting. Thank you, too, for your leadership in this very challenging time in our Nation's history.

In a relatively short period of time, the Council has succeeded in ways many thought impossible. Specifically, the Council established a model dual status commander Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that has been signed by you (and your predecessor, Secretary Gates) and all but two governors; and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 signed by President Obama on December 31 included language authorizing the call-up of Title 10 Reserve forces at the request of a governor and codified dual status command arrangements for disaster response. These are tremendous successes, showing that when the Council comes together, we can achieve great things on behalf of the people we all serve.

As we said at the Council meeting, the nation's governors and National Guard leaders support the new national military strategy. We also share your commitment for achieving fiscal efficiencies while maintaining maximum capabilities for defense of our homeland and American interests throughout the world. Your willingness to listen to the concerns of governors and Air National Guard leaders and openness to consider alternatives to the current Air Force federal fiscal year 2013 (FY13) budget submission is deeply appreciated.

Time being of the essence, we delivered an alternative plan to Air Force leaders through General Craig McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, last Friday, March 2. The plan we advanced:

- ensures that the Air Force meets the capability and force-sizing requirements directed by the new strategic guidance;
- increases combat capability while rebalancing the manpower and force structure cuts of the Air Force FY13 budget submission; and
- provides that states share costs with the Air Force by reducing full-time Air National Guard manpower and by re-missioning within the Air National Guard.

The plan also meets and even exceeds OSD-directed FY13 and federal fiscal year demand planning savings, preserves an even larger operational force structure than the current Air Force package, decreases operational risk by increasing surge capacity, and preserves our ability to provide support to civil authorities to defend our homeland.

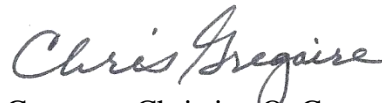
As the Air Force proposal is re-examined, we will continue to work through the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and ensure that all governors are informed of the Council's interaction with Air Force leaders.

Again, thank you for your commitment to the Council of Governors and for affording us the opportunity to engage in direct dialogue with senior Air Force officials. We look forward to finding common ground on the Air Force FY13 budget as we have on so many other important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terry E. Branstad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Co-Chair  
Council of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine O. Gregoire". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a prominent initial "C".

Governor Christine O. Gregoire  
Co-Chair  
Council of Governors