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The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
1001 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

June 12, 2008

Mr. Secretary,

I am in receipt of Deputy Secretary England's memo to the Service Secretaries, Service Chiefs, and OSD components regarding the forthcoming shutdown of essential Defense activities. As I write to you, the House of Representatives has again recessed for the week without passing the Department's supplemental funding request. I fear that such passage will not come before the Department's funds and reprogramming options are exhausted.

Several months ago, during a meeting with several of my colleagues, I asked you to lay out the specific impacts that this funding shortage would have on bases in our districts. Despite your personal assurance that the information would be forthcoming, I have not received any information at all from the Department of Defense.

The geographic bulk of Ft. Campbell falls within Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District, which I represent. As you are also aware, the bulk of the 101st Airborne Division, which is based at Ft. Campbell, is deployed in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, the Tennessee National Guard has 702 soldiers deployed in harm's way. I am writing for your prompt input on a series of questions on how the Department's current fiscal condition will impact Ft. Campbell, the 101st Airborne, and the Tennessee National Guard.

First, I would like to know what specific family support activities at Ft. Campbell are in danger of shut down. Please provide me with a list of all "non-essential" activities that impact the families of deployed soldiers at Ft. Campbell.

Second, I would like to know what steps the National Guard Bureau is taking to ensure that all family support activities for deployed Guardsmen will remain in place. Does the Department anticipate that any of these activities will need to be supplemented by the State of Tennessee?

Third, from my many visits to Iraq and Afghanistan I know how vital the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) is to our ongoing operations. It gives the men and women of the Tennessee Guard and the 101st Airborne the flexibility to fund vital

reconstruction projects in their areas of responsibility and thereby enhance their security and gain the trust of the local population. I understand that funding for this program is nearly exhausted and cannot be reprogrammed. With Defense funding nearly exhausted, what is the status of the CERP program?

Fourth, I understand that many civilian employees of Ft. Campbell are eligible for potential furlough. When gasoline in Clarksville costs nearly \$4.00 a gallon and families are saving to pay for a potential tax increase of greater than \$2,000.00, I would like to know how many civilian employees at Ft. Campbell might be without regular income during this tough time.

Finally, Secretary England's memo contains the ominous language "Military personnel will serve without pay until such time as appropriated funds are available to compensate them." The families of deployed soldiers are not exempt from the tough economic times facing Tennessee and the nation. Should pay for soldiers be suspended, what programs are in place to continue to support military families?

Your prompt personal response to these matters is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Gordon England, Deputy Secretary of Defense
cc: The Honorable Pete Geren, Secretary of The Army
cc: Major General Jeffrey Schloesser, Post Commander, Ft. Campbell
cc: Major General Gus Hargett, Adjutant General, Tennessee National Guard
cc: Colonel Frederick Swope, Garrison Commander, Ft. Campbell