

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2019

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0101

Dear Secretary Esper:

Under the guidance of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), the Department of Defense is working to develop, “A more lethal, resilient, and rapidly innovating Joint Force, combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners... [to] sustain American influence and ensure favorable balances of power that safeguard the free and open international order.” Through your leadership, the Army has taken the lead on developing new capabilities to achieve the strategic overmatch and combined training envisioned in the NDS necessary to defeat high end, near peer threats. In the era of constrained budgets, we want to recognize the Army’s efforts to resource these modernization priorities largely from within the existing financial framework.

As you examine ways to execute the Army’s strategic objectives, we wanted to make you aware of an opportunity to enhance the Army’s aviation modernization and readiness initiatives while supporting the NDS’s mandate to strengthen alliances and attract future partners. As the executive agent for all AH-64 Apache pilot training under the foreign military sales program, the Army must balance the need to provide training for our partners while also supporting the development of a robust and capable cadre of U.S. Army rotary wing pilots. In Fiscal Year 2018 there were 63 training seats available at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) for foreign Apache helicopter pilot training. Over the coming years, the training requirement for both the AH-64D and AH-64E Apache systems is expected to more than double. As the Army examines ways to balance support to allied partners and against U.S. Army aviation readiness, we hope you will consider expanding foreign military sales training at the Western Army Aviation Training Site (WAATS) in Arizona.

Using WAATS as a complementary training site could help alleviate the capacity issues at USAACE. WAATS has the equipment, personnel, base operations support, and subject matter expertise necessary to support the Apache foreign military sales training program. The base is currently operating at 35% of its maximum capacity and has access to hundreds of square miles of airspace dedicated to aviation training. Using this existing Army facility to augment current training will allow USAACE to continue to provide foreign military sales instruction without having to sacrifice the training needs of the U.S. Army’s Aviation branch.

The Arizona National Guard leadership has significant experience in training FMS pilots. The 162nd Wing in Tucson has been training partner nations in the F-16 since 1991. The Wing has leveraged their experience and maintenance capacity to train FMS pilots using both U.S. and partner aircraft. The 162nd began with training Netherlands and Singapore pilots and expanded to train all FMS training programs. WAATS currently has Singapore pilots training on site and this experience, leveraged with the experience of the 162nd, would be a natural solution to the FMS challenge.

It is in our national security interest to ensure the allied pilots flying alongside our Soldiers in combat meet the necessary training standards to provide the kind of strategic advantage our adversaries cannot match. Leveraging foreign military sales training at WAATS will ensure no American or allied pilot will lack proper training or skills because of throughput problems at one training instillation.

We look forward to continuing our partnership to deliver the best possible training to our Soldiers. We sincerely appreciate your dedication to the men and women of the United States Army, and look forward to your reply. If you have any questions or concerns you may reach Nick Rawls at Nick_Rawls@Sinema.Senate.Gov or Katie Chaudoin at Katie_Chaudoin@Mcsally.Senate.Gov.

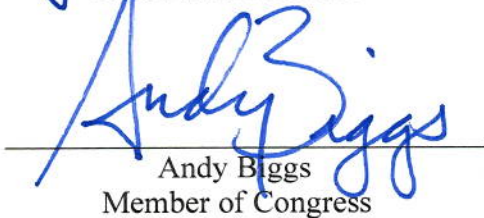
Sincerely,



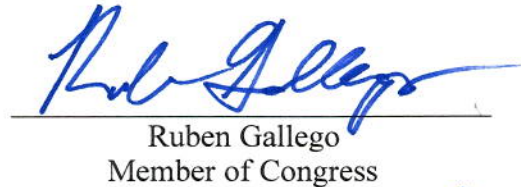
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Martha McSally
United States Senator



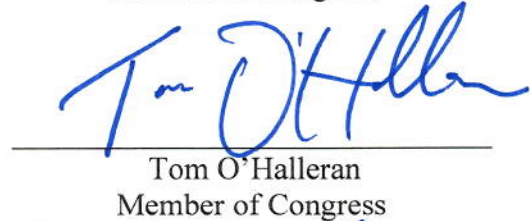
Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



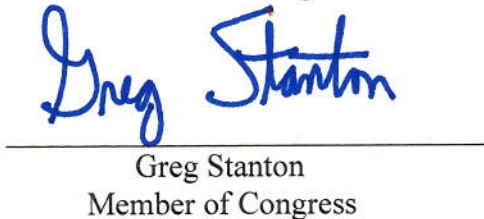
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