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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

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September 24, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter:

I am extremely concerned by the tragic death yesterday of a civilian metal shop worker in Tucson, Arizona, who was killed as he sought to dismantle and dispose of an unexploded 500-pound aerial bomb. While I understand that an investigation is ongoing, it is imperative for the Department of Defense to explain how this unexploded ordnance made its way into a civilian place of business. As a matter of national security, as well for the safety of the American public, this issue demands appropriate attention by the Department's senior leadership.

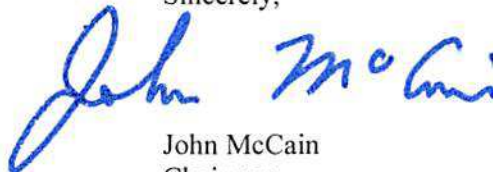
As such, I request you provide the following information as soon as available:

- 1) What was the exact path that led to this dangerous weapon being outside the Department's chain of custody?
- 2) What are the current security procedures and assessed efficacy of such procedures with regard to safeguarding bombing ranges that may contain live and unexploded ordnance, such as areas of the Barry M. Goldwater range complex in southern Arizona, and other similar ranges across the United States?
- 3) What methods are in place to educate the general public as to the characteristics and dangers of potentially live military weapons they may inadvertently encounter, and what actions they should take if they do encounter such devices?
- 4) What are the current cooperation and coordination procedures between the Department of Defense and local, state, and other Federal authorities in this area of concern?
- 5) What are the assessed risks of such devices coming under the control of persons with nefarious intentions, and how is the Department mitigating those risks?

Training ranges to keep our military forces at the peak of readiness are precious national assets. We must be good stewards of the public's safety and well-being if we are to retain the use of these commodities loaned to us by our American citizens.

I look forward to your timely responses. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and for your continued service to the Department and our Nation.

Sincerely,



John McCain
Chairman