

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 20, 2010

The Honorable Dr. Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

We are writing to express strong support for continuing the Non-Line of Sight Launch System (NLOS-LS) under a revised development plan and that an associated funding request be transmitted to Congress as soon as possible.

The NLOS-LS is well suited for irregular warfare operations that often call for immediate precision fires with minimal collateral damage. NLOS-LS also has a minimal logistical footprint and all-weather capability, allowing it to provide the required fire support in theater better and more flexibly than current systems. The system provides extraordinarily precise firepower with very broad geographic coverage with a single Container Launch Unit providing fires coverage across an area of 5,000 square kilometers. Moreover, the system is a joint developmental program with the Navy. NLOS-LS will ultimately also provide the integral sea-based support for ground forces from the Littoral Combat Ship's surface warfare package.

Across the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, the validated requirement remains for this system. However, we are deeply concerned by the lack of definitive support for the program from Army leadership and spotlight the postponement of the Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) meeting that was scheduled for April 2, 2010.

Without question, the NLOS-LS did not perform as expected or hoped in the most recent Limited User Test (LUT). Of the four missed shots, two known root causes were identified and corrective action applied and on two misses the failure mode was understood and software and corrective action is being implemented. While the test flights prior to LUT did demonstrate success with direct hits in twelve of seventeen shots, and root cause and corrective action applied to all misses, it is clear that additional development is required to mature this system, but that a final mature system is near.

We understand that a plan has been developed by the Army and industry which would lead to an extension of the program for approximately one year with a second set of flight tests in the Spring of 2011. It is also our understanding that the revised test plan provides multiple off-ramps for the Army to continue to evaluate progress on the program. Expedient approval of the path forward will allow the Army, industry partners and Congress to work together to ensure that this capability reaches our warfighters.

We are concerned that the Army may prematurely terminate the NLOS-LS program prior to final approval and funding of the revised plan. Doing so undermines the goal of the test process, which is to evaluate systems and fix errors prior to production. This testing worked as designed. Terminating NLOS-LS at this stage would prevent the Army and Navy from fulfilling an urgent capability gap.

Ultimately, the goal of developing and thoroughly testing major weapons systems should be to put that system into the field, however, increasingly that has been the exception rather than the rule. We believe

that cancellation of NLOS-LS at this stage would further erode efforts to modernize Army fire support and undermine a major component of the Navy's fire support mission.

We urge the Army to see this program through to fruition, redouble its efforts to complete development of NLOS-LS and field this capability to the warfighter by late 2011. We further ask that you provide us with the details of a revised program and associated funding requirements without delay so that it may be fully considered in the context of this year's Defense authorization and appropriations cycles.

Thank you for your time and continued service. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



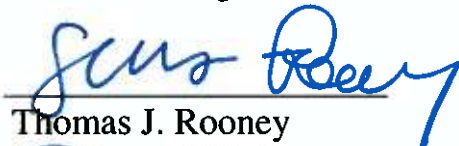
Gabrielle Giffords  
Member of Congress



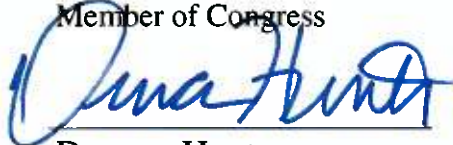
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Robert E. Andrews  
Member of Congress



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress



Rick Boucher  
Member of Congress



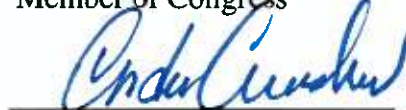
Denny Rehberg  
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