

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Budget Act of 1974 and House Rule X, clause 4(f) of the Rules of the House of Representatives, We are forwarding you our additional views to those submitted by the House Committee on Armed Services regarding the national defense budget function for fiscal year 2010.

We share the committee's belief in the imperative that the United States, and America's interests, must remain protected by a strong national defense. Unfortunately, in the absence of specific budget details from the Department of Defense, it is difficult to assess whether the Administration's defense budget request is appropriately shaped and sized to meet this imperative. However, we have learned sufficient details about the request to offer one specific concern.

Under your leadership, the House Committee on the Budget has taken a strong position against wasteful government spending. In House Report 110-69, the committee report accompanying the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, the committee recognized "the need for DOD to root out wasteful sending with far more diligence."

In the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2009, the House Budget Committee called for "a reallocation of resources to address the most severe threats facing the nation, to emphasize readiness, to guarantee first-rate health care for members of our armed forces, and to improve the quality of life of our troops and their families," reemphasized the importance of rooting out wasteful spending, and highlighted "the need for DOD to do a better job of reconciling its plans with its budget, including the Navy's shipbuilding plan... that is not viable in terms of providing the Navy with an adequate ship force..."

While we may differ on the spending levels that we believe necessary to fully fund our nation's defense needs, or on specific priorities within the defense budget, we agree with the importance of rooting out wasteful spending and wish to emphasize our concerns with the apparent disconnect between DOD requirements, plans, and budgets. Indeed, we fully expect this disconnect to manifest itself in the form of one particularly wasteful item expected to appear in the defense budget request for fiscal year 2010 – initial funding for a project anticipated to cost approximately three-quarters of a billion dollars to expand the Navy's infrastructure at Naval Station Mayport, Florida, to accommodate a nuclear aircraft carrier.

The Navy has attempted to justify this project by claiming a desire to "hedge against a catastrophic event in Hampton Roads," which is the only east coast port capable of homeporting a nuclear carrier. This is a remarkable statement, considering that: (1) the Navy has never had – and has never needed – more than one port on the east coast capable of homeporting a nuclear carrier, despite having a nuclear carrier fleet since 1960; (2) a single east coast nuclear carrier

port has been sufficient for the Navy throughout four decades of the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and eight years of the post-9/11 Global War on Terror; and (3) the Navy has not conducted a meaningful assessment of the need to "hedge against a catastrophic event" in the region.

Despite these facts, and the substantial costs, the Navy has failed to justify the expenditure of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to make Mayport a nuclear carrier port. Instead, the Navy has effectively proposed to expand its inventory of infrastructure, even while it works to fulfill its 2005 Base Realignment and Closure mandates to reduce its inventory by closing bases such as Naval Station Ingleside, Texas and Naval Station Pascagoula, Mississippi.

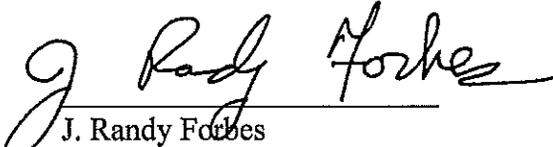
In October 2005, after the House affirmed the 2005 base realignment and closure list, you noted, "We've been through this process four times before, and I hope that this round will be the last for a long time to come." We share in your hope that another round of base closures will not be necessary, but unnecessary Department of Defense actions to expand infrastructure capacity at locations like Naval Station Mayport are the surest path to needing another BRAC round that reconciles infrastructure with force structure.

The Navy's proposal is even more astounding when considering recent reports that the fiscal year 2010 budget may force the Navy to cut its carrier fleet to 10 ships. Such reports indicate significant turmoil in the service's force planning construct, making any decision to expand infrastructure to accommodate forces that may not exist in the near future premature. Further, many analysts consider the Navy's shipbuilding plan to be highly unrealistic, and the service has admitted a substantial gap between its planned fighter aircraft inventory and its actual needs. As such, we must conclude that the Navy has once again failed to reconcile its requirements with its budgets.

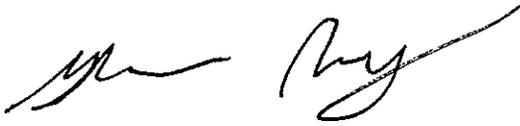
We note that last year's budget resolution included a policy statement that savings resulting from cuts to missile defense programs, reductions in research, development, and procurement programs, and termination of weapons geared towards meeting Cold War-era threats should be used to meet higher priority needs, such as readiness and military pay and benefits. We expect that you will agree that the expenditure of taxpayer dollars to unnecessarily expand Navy infrastructure would be better applied to meeting military readiness requirements, closing the Navy's strike fighter shortfall, building additional ships for the fleet, and improving the quality of life for our military personnel.

If the committee intends to include such a policy statement in this year's budget resolution, we urge that wasteful funding for the expansion of Mayport be included as a program that should be terminated in order to resource higher priority needs of the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,



J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



Glenn C Nye
Member of Congress