

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Panetta:

Following the release of your "Defense Budget Priorities and Choices" document on January 26, 2012, we write today to again encourage you to review the Navy's 2008 proposal to homeport a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier (CVN) at Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

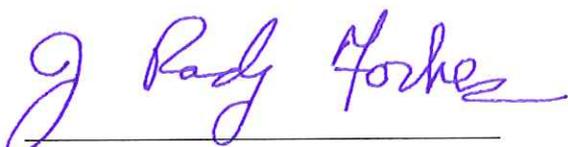
In the Chief of Naval Operations' correspondence to us on this matter from October 21, 2011, ADM Greenert clearly stated that "the size of the fiscal adjustments (*Budget Control Act of 2011*) compels us to take a comprehensive strategic review, examining every program element, including the funding required to homeport a CVN in Mayport. You can be assured I will include your concerns in the Navy's strategic calculus." We welcomed the CNO's decision.

In your announcement from January 26, you began to clarify the Department's decisions regarding its strategic review of the U.S. Navy, including the early-retirement of seven CG-47 Cruisers, two LSD landing ships, and the delay of an Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA), two Littoral Combat Ships (LCS), eight Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV), and one *Virginian*-class submarine. In addition to these new reductions, during FY12, the Navy suffered from a \$217 million shortfall in ship maintenance. Across the Department, you also chose to eliminate six of the Air Force's 60 tactical air squadrons, terminate the RQ-4 Global Hawk Block 30 program, reduce the size of the Army by some 80,000 soldiers and reduce the Marine Corps by 20,000.

We have always questioned the rationale underlying the Department's decision to homeport a CVN in Mayport. Given the breadth of defense budget reductions now being applied across the Department, and specifically to the U.S. Navy, we remain convinced that allocating an estimated \$500 million to \$1 billion to this project would not be in the strategic interests of the Department of the Navy nor the fiscal interests of the nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Representative J. Randy Forbes



Representative Bobby Scott

Robert J. Wittman

Representative Rob Wittman

Scott Rigell

Representative Scott Rigell