SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

JUN 18 2015

The Honorable Lynn Westmoreland
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Westmoreland:

Thank you for your May 28, 2015 letter concerning Army force reductions and the potential impact on the 3rd Infantry Division's Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), at Fort Benning and Fort Stewart, Georgia.

We share a common concern over the threat that sequestration poses to the readiness of our armed forces and our Nation's defense. In the face of the severe fiscal constraints caused by current law budget caps, the Army must continue to meet the Nation's strategic and defense objectives. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) states that the Army Active Component will reduce from its wartime high force of 570,000 to 450,000 Soldiers. The QDR also states if sequestration-level cuts are again imposed in fiscal year 2016 and beyond, Active Component end-strength will further reduce to 420,000.

As you noted, the Army must maintain the appropriate balance among force structure, force readiness, and modernization as it reduces its end-strength. In addition, the Army must preserve Soldier and Family quality of life and the All-Volunteer Force while adapting the force to reduced resources. The Army is currently analyzing its available options to achieve these objectives; however, no final decisions have been made.

General Raymond T. Odierno and I both recognize the value of the 3rd Infantry Division's BCTs and we share your immense pride in the men and women who serve in the Division. At the same time, we know that very difficult choices lie ahead. The Army understands that Fort Benning and Fort Stewart provide tremendous capabilities to our Army, and that the surrounding communities enthusiastically support our Soldiers and their Families. The Army will fully consider all the benefits that both installations offer to train Soldiers, support Families and contribute to the defense of the Nation as our analysis proceeds.

Again, thank you for your continued support of our Soldiers and their Families.

Sincerely,

John M. McHugh

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