Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2005

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We have had the opportunity to review the pre-decisional draft of the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*. We commend the President and you for your leadership on this initiative, and offer our assistance in helping to implement this strategy.

In particular, we are pleased to see that the strategy gives extensive consideration to the critical maritime aspects of homeland defense. As Members of Congress from Maine, a state with a long coastline and significant maritime commercial interests, we recognize that guarding maritime approaches is an essential component in protecting the homeland.

We are strong supporters of the Navy's maritime patrol fleet. We believe that this community, with its P-3C Orion aircraft and the next generation Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA), form an indispensable component to the overall homeland defense strategy:

1. Among its strategic goals and key objectives, the strategy states that as part of the layered defense concept, the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security are working to "integrate U.S. maritime defense and to optimize the mutually supporting capabilities of the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard." It quotes the Chief of Naval Operations on the need to identify, track and intercept threats before they reach U.S. shores, and to "extend the security of the United States seaward." The P-3 is perfectly suited for this mission, and has already adopted an array of joint intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and anti-surface warfare activities. With its extended range, speed, and sensor suite, the MMA will offer even more capability.

2. The strategy identifies the need for core capabilities to (a) detect and track potential maritime threats effectively, (b) intercept and defeat threats in the maritime approaches, and (c) direct consequence management.

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The maritime patrol fleet provides these capabilities today, to help "ensure persistent wide-area surveillance and reconnaissance of the U.S. maritime approaches." With maritime patrol bases located at the "four corners" of the continental United States, as well as on Hawaii, the P-3 fleet is optimally based to provide comprehensive maritime domain awareness. In the future, the MMA's increased capabilities will allow a response time to any point on the coast of less than two hours from these bases. All major sea lanes of approach can be covered within operational range of the aircraft. As an example, Naval Air Station Brunswick is located strategically astride the Atlantic sea lanes. As the only capable active duty airfield in the Northeast, the base is uniquely positioned to provide awareness of the maritime approaches and protect the economically critical ports in the region. Aircrews from NAS Brunswick have been flying in support of Vigilant Shield since September 11, 2001.

The strategy also calls for enhanced international collaboration to establish maritime domain awareness of identification and interdiction of potential threats. The P-3 has already demonstrated its value in this area through its contribution to the multi-national exercises under the Proliferation Security Initiative. NAS Brunswick is integrated as a NATO facility and regularly supports multiple types of foreign aircraft.

The P-3 also provides a valuable tool for consequence management for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear of high-yield explosive (CBRNE) attacks. As demonstrated in the aftermath of the South Asian tsunami, the P-3s are a rapidly deployable asset that provides decision-makers with real-time information which cannot be provided by any other airborne platform in the U.S. inventory.

3. The strategy identifies the need for shaping the <u>force structure</u> for homeland defense missions. As mentioned, the maritime patrol fleet is already proven to successfully adapt to multiple missions. The strategy calls for the development of new generations of sensors to enhance domain awareness and maritime defense. Both the advanced sensor suite on board the MMA and the aircraft's planned operational integration with the BAMS UAV meet this goal.

The strategy also observes the critical role for the Naval Reserve in maritime security. The reserve P-3 components have fully integrated with active duty squadrons, forming a seamless operational force. In the case of NAS Brunswick, we note that the planned establishment of a Joint Armed Forces Reserve Center on the base will further enhance the Naval Reserve's role in homeland defense.

Again, we welcome the development of the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* as a critical step toward ensuring we have the right strategy, capabilities and force structure to defend the homeland. It is clear that the U.S. Navy's maritime patrol fleet will be an indispensable part of this strategy. We appreciate your consideration of our comments, and look forward to working with you to advance this strategy.

Sincerely,

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator

SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator

MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
United States Representative

THOMAS H. ALLEN
United States Representative

cc: Mr. Stephen Hadley, National Security Advisor