

January 17, 2017

Mr. Donald J. Trump  
President-elect  
Trump-Pence Transition Team  
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-elect Trump:

I write to express my serious concerns regarding continuity of government operations related to national security positions in the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the Department of Defense. In three days, unless directed otherwise by your transition team, our country will lack high-ranking officials in charge of critical responsibilities such as overseeing our nation's nuclear stockpile and managing the strongest military in the world.

I urge you to immediately notify and request high-ranking officials who are currently serving their country to continue serving for a limited amount of time until you nominate their successors.

As you know, on January 20, 2017, all of President Barack Obama's appointed officials are required to vacate their office unless they are requested by the incoming administration to serve for an extended period of time. As of today, the heads of maintaining our nation's nuclear arsenal, Lieutenant General Frank G. Klotz (Ret.), and Principal Deputy Administrator, Madelyn Creedon, have *not* been requested to continue serving. With career civil servants in acting positions, important functions and decisions related to the \$12.9 billion budget of the NNSA, nuclear weapons life extension programs, project planning, facility construction, and personnel decisions impacting the workforce of over 25,000 employees will be put on hold pending confirmation of your administration's nominees by the Senate. This will be the first time in NNSA's 16-year history, through four different administrations, in which there will not be any continuity in leadership during a presidential transition.

At the Department of Defense, only six of 58 presidentially appointed Pentagon officials are known to have been asked to stay in their positions through the transition process. The Department of Defense is the largest employer in the world with nearly 1.3 million active duty servicemen and women, 801,000 National Guardsmen, and 742,000 civilians. The Department requires steady leadership to manage a \$582.7 billion budget and execute a number of important

functions including, but not limited to, personnel benefits and healthcare, the acquisition of major weapon systems, technology development, and nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs.

I welcomed your choice for the next Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis (Ret.), and I supported providing a waiver on the Senate Armed Services Committee to allow him to fill that role as soon as possible. In authorizing such a waiver, Congress provided a rare one-time exception to a law that seeks to preserve civilian control of the military. It is therefore even more important that the Department of Defense ensures continuity of government in the remaining 52 national security *civilian* positions that could potentially be vacated on January 20th.

I understand that new administrations, regardless of political party, bring new management and personnel, but the United States faces an increasing number of global threats—to include North Korea, Russia, China, Iran, and terrorist organizations across several continents—and we simply cannot afford to allow national security positions to effectively run on “auto-pilot.” The responsibilities are too important.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I take the United States Senate’s advise and consent role for national security nominees very seriously, and I look forward to considering each of your future nominations. Until then, it would be in the best interests of our country and our national security to ask those individuals currently appointed to national security positions at the NNSA and the Pentagon to continue serving their country.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator