



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAY - 4 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your March 13, 2017, letter regarding possible privatization of air traffic control (ATC) services provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Specifically, you asked for our views on privatizing these types of services from the perspective of Department of Defense (DoD) operations. You also requested DoD's recommendations on how privatization could be accomplished while preserving our inherently governmental responsibilities for national security, aerospace control, and sovereignty operations, and necessary prioritization of military airspace use for test and evaluation, and training and readiness purposes.

The DoD is supportive of possible privatization of ATC services and recognizes the potential risks regarding DoD's national security responsibilities, as you suggest in your letter. To address these concerns, we have formed an ad hoc committee comprised of Combatant Command and Military Department representatives to assess the current ATC relationship between DoD and the FAA within 120 days in order to delineate the linkages that would be necessary with a privatized ATC entity. Additionally, we are and will continue to be engaged with interagency forums led by representatives from the Office of Management and Budget, National Economic Council and National Security Council to ensure privatization efforts going forward preserve our national security interests.

Thank you for all that you do for our Nation. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Kevin Sweeney, Chief of Staff, at kevin.sweeney@sd.mil if you have any questions regarding this letter.

John Mattis