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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3303

October 16, 2014

The Honorable John McHugh  
Secretary of the United States Army  
1600 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-1600

Dear Secretary McHugh,

I write to you deeply concerned for the safety and welfare of more than 3,000 American troops supporting Operation United Assistance in West Africa. I have spoken with many Marines from Camp Lejeune and have met many Eastern North Carolinians who express similar concerns of our troops unintentionally encountering the devastating Ebola virus. I find the proposed strategy to combat Ebola lacking critical information and largely outside the core of the Army's mission, "to fight and win our nation's wars."

The unanswered questions are many and I kindly ask for clarification of the following:

1. How many service members are currently on deployment orders to West Africa? What is the breakdown of their military occupational specialties? What pre-deployment training did these service members undergo?
2. Prior to September 30, 2014, did the United States Army maintain any presence in West African nations? If so, what countries and in what capacity did those service members or Department of the Army Civilians serve?
3. Does the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases maintain a presence in West Africa? If so, when and where did they encounter cases of Ebola in the region? What actions followed these reports, specifically to operations and containment efforts?
4. What plans are in place to ensure the safety and security of U.S. military personnel operating in Ebola stricken nations? Expert projections of the virus's alarming spread is troubling as is the 56% lethality rate of current health care workers who contracted the disease while conducting humanitarian work. What assurances and safe measures is the Army providing the families of deployed service members in West Africa?

Our service members and their loved ones deserve to understand the exact details of their mission and assurances of safety. I insist the Army takes every precaution necessary and trust you will give this matter the attention it deserves. Our brave men and women deserve no less.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress