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February 1, 2021

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
GAO Comptroller General of the United States  
441 G St. NW Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro,

I am reaching out to officially request you evaluate the methodology and scoring of the Department of the Air Force's (DAF) decision-making process for the location of the permanent headquarters for U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM). As you may be aware, there have been concerns raised as to whether or not there was untoward political influence exerted by President Trump on DAF leaders to modify the process and ensure Huntsville, Alabama was chosen.<sup>1,2</sup> I am not requesting that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) address any of those concerns, however, I do request GAO, as a disinterested third party with expertise in evaluating these metrics, provide its analysis of how the DAF scored each location. I have included as attachments a letter from the New Mexico Congressional delegation, a letter from the Colorado Congressional delegation, and a letter from Congressman Jim Cooper and Congressman John Garamendi as the chairmen of the House Armed Services Committee's Strategic Forces Subcommittee and Readiness Subcommittee, respectively. There is clearly a great deal of interest in the methodology employed by DAF.

As such, I request that GAO look into the methodology employed by DAF, and specifically that you rigorously verify that they were consistent in both their overall process and how they scored each site. Here are several of the questions I respectfully submit for GAO to investigate:

1) *Did the scoring process differ from the historical strategic basing decision making processes of DAF and Department of Defense (DOD)? If so, how?*

2) *Were the evaluation criteria applied equally to each of the sites in question?*

*Specifically:*

- a. *Did the evaluated school districts encompass the same corresponding geographic areas in both Colorado Springs and Huntsville?*
- b. *Did the corresponding geographic areas evaluated for cost of living assessment correspond to the areas whose school districts were evaluated?*

<sup>1</sup> [https://gazette.com/news/trump-orders-u-s-space-command-to-leave-colorado/article\\_83762216-55cc-11eb-9075-1f99ce1965b8.html](https://gazette.com/news/trump-orders-u-s-space-command-to-leave-colorado/article_83762216-55cc-11eb-9075-1f99ce1965b8.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/01/space-force-trump-biden/617812/>

- 3) *The DAF used a novel approach to evaluating schools found in their Support of Military Families (SOMF) report. Attachment (4) provides the Colorado Department of Education's response. Can GAO provide an assessment of the DAF SOMF evaluation?*
- 4) *Given the original strategic basing decision-making process as shared by the DAF in November 2020, does GAO believe they deviated in any way from these publicly stated criteria? If so, how?*
- 5) *Any other significant findings or feedback the GAO may wish to share in response to the DAF's decision-making process for the headquarters location of USSPACECOM.*

If you have any questions relating to the nature of this request, please contact Andrew Braun on my staff at [andrew.braun@mail.house.gov](mailto:andrew.braun@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-4422. I thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Attachments:

- (1) Letter from Congressman Cooper and Congressman Garamendi to Office of Secretary of Defense Inspector General
- (2) Letter from Colorado Congressional Delegation to President Biden
- (3) Letter from New Mexico Congressional Delegation to President Biden
- (4) Colorado Department of Education Analysis of the SOMF Analytical Framework
- (5) Department of the Air Force US Space Command Headquarters Briefing to Congress