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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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September 20, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis:

I appreciate your continued efforts at reducing waste at all levels of the military.

Today, I am writing to you on a related matter -- my ongoing investigation regarding a joint Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)/Department of Defense (DoD) effort to modify a counternarcotics aircraft, named the Global Discovery Program (program).<sup>1</sup>

At my request, the DoD Office of the Inspector General (DODIG) recently completed an audit report that determined the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats (DASD CN&GT) failed to effectively manage the program.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the DODIG report reached this startling conclusion: "The DASD CN&G **wasted** at least \$64.8 million on the Global Discovery Program ..... Consequently, the DoD received no benefit for its more than 7 years' work."<sup>3</sup> The aircraft involved, an ATR 42-500, is a hangar queen. Aside from a small number of routine transport missions, it has been up on jacks in a hangar and never flew a single counter-narcotics mission in Afghanistan as intended. It's now to be sold at auction.<sup>4</sup>

In July, you issued a memorandum (memo) on the DoD mission and stewardship responsibilities. In it, you specifically focus on the need for "budget discipline," and stated that you "expect leaders at all levels in the Department to exercise the utmost degree of stewardship over every penny we spend." I believe the DoD spending on the counternarcotics plane failed to live up to that responsibility.

While three DoD offices responded to the DODIG audit report, not a single official took any responsibility. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy stated that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/a1616.pdf#page=1>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dodig.mil/pubs/documents/DODIG-2017-119.pdf>, p. i.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. i.

their office was “not directly responsible for the execution for the contracted services in question.”<sup>5</sup> The DASD CN&GT stated that their office was a “resource sponsor for the program, but was not directly responsible for the oversight or execution of contracted services that ultimately failed to complete the aircraft modification.”<sup>6</sup> The US Central Command absolved the DASD CN&GT stating, “[W]e believe the report incorrectly assigns responsibility for the failures of the program principally to the DASD CN&GT office. The report does not sufficiently address the role of the DoD contracting agencies whose primary role was Global Discovery program management and contract execution.”<sup>7</sup>

As DoD officials are passing the buck, the American taxpayers are left holding the bag yet again. In line with your call to “take aggressive steps to end waste in the department,” I ask that a DoD review be conducted to determine who is responsible for what happened. Once that determination is made, there should be an appropriate measure of accountability, including potential disciplinary action. The management and funding of the counternarcotics plane should be used as a prime example of the need to head off this waste.

Your cooperation with my oversight work is always appreciated. I look forward to your answer.

Sincerely,

*Chuck*

Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman

*Common sense dictates that if an admiral can be fired or the Captain of a vessel can be dismissed because their ship rams another (if that action is taken because of dereliction of duty) then these people connected with this failist plane need to be fired. If heads don't roll, nothing changes.*

*Thanks for your consideration.*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 51.