

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY WASHINGTON MAR 1 5 2013

The Honorable Duncan Hunter United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hunter:

Thank you for your February 19, 2013 letter expressing your concerns about the effectiveness of the Human Terrain System (HTS) program, and suggesting that funding for HTS should be examined as a possible source for cuts to offset the effects of sequestration.

As you may know, HTS was first started in 2007 as a pilot program with only 5 teams of social scientists, who were trained and sent into Iraq to provide cultural expertise to troops engaged in the surge. Ordinarily, a pilot takes several years to mature into a full program, with leadership taking much of that time to create the optimum command structure, training and personnel mix before providing a full capability. The Army did not have that luxury with HTS.

Within months of the first team arriving in theater, commanders were requesting this capability at such numbers that Central Command issued a Joint Urgent Operational Need Statement to obtain more teams. The pace of operations in theater and demand for the capability caused the Army to have to work out the program's critical aforementioned administrative details while simultaneously providing the full capability to our deployed troops. This immediate need required the Army to utilize contract solutions, building both the command structure and training program from scratch as quickly as possible. By 2008, the Army had 30 teams in theater, en route to a peak of 45 teams in 2010.

Creating a full program in such a way naturally led to some command, training and personnel challenges over the first couple of years. During this period of time, the Army executed oversight through standard contract procedures and the Internal Management Control Process. However, as we always do in the Army, we worked continually to refine HTS, conducting multiple internal and external assessments, including the investigation you cited in your letter. Based on these assessments, the Army made changes to HTS to increase oversight, improve personnel selection and enhance effectiveness. In 2009, the Army transitioned all deployed HTS team members into government term employees. Likewise, in 2010, we filled key HTS leadership and staff positions with government term employees and uniformed personnel in order to formalize the program with a military-like structure, functionality and oversight. As part of this effort, the Army assigned a Colonel to lead HTS, with the goal of transforming it from a contract-based "start-up" to an institutionalized Army capability.

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In spite of the administrative challenges, HTS has been a very successful program. Commanders of combat units supported by HTS in Iraq and Afghanistan have repeatedly indicated that HTS adds significant value to their operations. For example, a 2011 Vice Chief of Staff of the Army survey found that ninety-six percent of units rated their HTS support as excellent, outstanding or of great value. Three command-level assessments, conducted as recently as November 2012, confirmed commanders' overwhelming support of HTS. This was consistent at all levels from Brigade and Regimental Combat Teams up through Theater, in both Army and Marine Corps units, and by all nationalities (British, Canadian and French).

As to the future of this program, the Army does not intend to expand HTS; rather, the goal is to build it into an enduring core capability to avoid a future "cold start." We will take all of the lessons learned over the last several years and incorporate them into a small, enduring HTS force generation capability for our Regionally Aligned Forces' support to Army Service Component Command requirements. As recognized by the House Armed Services Committee in the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Years (FY) 2009, 2010 and 2011, social science expertise as provided by HTS is critical to military planning and operations, especially in cases of irregular warfare, counterinsurgency, stability and reconstruction.

Finally, regarding the flexibility of HTS funding, HTS is and has always been primarily financed with Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) money. The Army cannot use OCO funding to offset sequestration cuts because it directly pays for HTS support to forces in Afghanistan. In FY 2013, HTS received \$56.5 million in OCO funding and \$2.1 million in base funding. The HTS base funding across the FY13 President's Budget FY13-18 is \$10.6 million total, rather than the \$250 million you indicated.

I trust this response is helpful. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, who has oversight of HTS, is standing by to provide any additional information you may need. Thank you for your inquiry into this matter and for your continued support of our Soldiers and their Families.

Sincerely,

ohn M. McHugh