

JOHN BOOZMAN
ARKANSAS

141 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
202-224-4843

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2020

COMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
CHAIR, COMMODITIES, RISK MANAGEMENT, AND TRADE

APPROPRIATIONS
CHAIR, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:

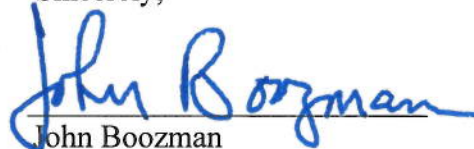
I write to express my deep concern regarding attacks against U.S. and Coalition members in Iraq. As tensions continue to rise between the U.S., Iran and Iranian proxies, it is imperative that we deploy capabilities to protect our military and civilians on the ground in the region. During my recent trip to Iraq, I was able to see first-hand and discuss with commanders the gaps in both base and air defense capabilities. After my visit, I remain deeply concerned with the immediate threat to U.S. military and civilian personnel and facilities in the region.

I believe recent attacks and the continued threat in the region emphasize the need for the Army to continue the current fielding timeline of procuring two interim Iron Dome batteries. Furthermore, I strongly encourage consideration be given to deploying one Iron Dome battery to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility to counter missile, rocket, artillery and mortar threats. I appreciate and support the Department's quick and decisive actions over the past few months to address the Iranian threat and to protect our servicemembers in harm's way. I believe deploying one of the Iron Dome batteries to the CENTCOM theater augments those efforts and enhances our capability to neutralize any direct threat to our deployed servicemembers.

Section 112 of the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the U.S. Army to purchase two interim cruise missile defense systems (CMD) for fielding in 2020. Congress later approved reprogramming requests and appropriations to support the Army in procuring these two systems. After the Army's thorough review and comparison of multiple types of systems, they choose to field two interim Iron Dome batteries. Over time, the Iron Dome system has proven its effectiveness to intercept a wide range of indirect and aerial threats, with a success rate of 90%. Iron Dome's proven air defense capability solidifies why a deployment to the CENTCOM theater will enhance our force protection posture in the region.

Again, I strongly urge your consideration to deploy an Iron Dome battery to the CENTCOM theater. I appreciate your effort to keep our military and civilians in the region safe, and I will continue working with my colleagues to ensure you have the resources to do so. Thank you for your service and your consideration of my request on this important matter.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator

106 W. MAIN ST.
SUITE 104
EL DORADO, AR 71730
870-863-4641

1120 GARRISON AVE.
SUITE 2B
FORT SMITH, AR 72901
479-573-0189

300 S. CHURCH ST.
SUITE 400
JONESBORO, AR 72401
870-268-6925

1401 W. CAPITOL AVE.
SUITE 155
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201
501-372-7153

213 W. MONROE
SUITE N
LOWELL, AR 72745
479-725-0400

1001 Hwy. 62 E.
SUITE 11
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653
870-424-0129

620 E. 22nd St.
SUITE 204
STUTTGART, AR 72160
870-672-6941