

AMERICAN DEFENSE CENTER

A PROGRAM OF THE CIVIC COUNCIL

**THIS IS A COPY OF THE LETTER THAT WAS MAILED TO EVERY
MEMBER OF THE U.S. SENATE & U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

February 8, 2008

Dear Senator XXXX or Rep. XXXXXX,

As the Executive Director of the American Defense Center, I am writing to you today on behalf of our 72,035 members.

The American Defense Center is a national non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to educate, inform and advocate on behalf of our members regarding America's national and economic security.

A major concern to us, is the decreased American presence at the Panama Canal and the increased presence and control of the Canal by companies with close ties to the Chinese government. Among other threats, China has developed ways of mounting missiles on container ships. American territory is in easy reach of such missiles.

As you know, the importance of American access to and through the Canal for military and economic reasons is vital. A Chinese company (Hutchinson Whampoa) controls the ports at both ends of the Canal, and might well be involved in the planned expansion of the Canal, further deepening its influence over traffic through the Canal.

The American Defense Center is concerned that Panama has no army to deal with threats to the Canal. Both President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Al Qaeda terrorists have expressed an interest in the Canal, the former to 'protect' it, the latter to blow up a lock, an act that would result in months of closure, if not worse.

In the past year, we have heard from 92,351 Americans who are concerned with the current situation at the Panama Canal. We urge you to take action to implement the Panama Canal Treaty that makes the United States a guarantor of the Canal's neutrality. At a minimum, our country should have a joint force (with Panama) to secure the Canal against very real threats.

America built the Panama Canal at great human and financial cost, and because America was its original guardian, we feel it is crucial that the Canal's strategic importance not be overlooked in this age of international terror and asymmetrical warfare. The dangers to our country are simply too great.

Because we are a non-partisan organization, the American Defense Center welcomes any and all opportunities to assist members of the Congress from both parties in furthering our goal of strengthening our national and economic security.

We would welcomes any chance to work with you in drafting legislation to strengthen and increase our presence at the Canal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if the American Defense Center can be of any assistance. We look forward to working with you this year.

Respectfully,



Thomas Cromwell, Executive Director