

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

July 25, 2008

Mr. Thomas Cromwell
Executive Director
American Defense Center
5235 Westview Drive, Suite 100
Frederick, Maryland 21703

Dear Mr. Cromwell:

Thank you for contacting me in regard to U.S. presence at the Panama Canal.

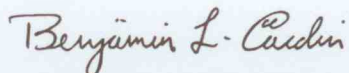
China's rapid economic growth during the past three decades has led the country to become more assertive in international affairs. Control of the canal's container shipping ports by the Hong-Kong-based firm Hutchinson Whampoa, which is owned by a Chinese national, demonstrates China's growing economic power.

In addition, U.S. presence at the Panama Canal is increasing. According to the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), a renewed strategic alliance between the ACP and the Tampa Port Authority is strengthening trade between the U.S. and Panama. In addition, two U.S. companies recently submitted bids to provide consulting services for projects under the Canal Expansion Program, demonstrating strong U.S. ties and interest in the canal.

Therefore, I believe that increasing U.S. military presence in the area would be counterproductive to our goal of expanding economic ties between the two countries. I believe that diplomacy is the best option for the U.S.

I very much appreciate your taking the time to let me know of your support for this legislation, and I hope you will not hesitate to contact me again about this or any other issue of importance to you.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

BLC:an

Reply To:

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