

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable David L. Norquist
Deputy Secretary Of Defense
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

Dear Secretary Esper and Secretary Norquist:

We write to express our profound concern regarding the potential elimination of the College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC) as a component institution of the National Defense University (NDU). The NDU was established “to consolidate intellectual resources and provide joint higher education for the nation’s defense community.” An integral part of that mission, the CIC exists to provide degree-conferring and other programs in critical warfighting areas within cyber and information warfare. Given the importance of the emerging cyber and information domains and the ever-increasing reliance on technology in warfare, we see any diminution in or disaggregation of the CIC’s programs as gravely shortsighted.

We believe that academic programs specializing in cyber and information warfare should not be relegated to standalone elective courses within other NDU colleges, in lieu of their full degree or certificate-granting status at the CIC. We fear that such an action sends the wrong message to our warfighters and to our adversaries. The strategic environment today demands carefully calibrated strategy, policy and operations in cyberspace and the information domain. Accordingly, we should be building up — not diluting— cyber education for military and civilian personnel.

Further, it is our understanding that a number of components within the Department of Defense — including the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. Cyber Command and the Chief Information Officer — have made clear that this decision would cause unacceptable harm to the joint mission of training and cultivating a professional cyber workforce, resulting in a workforce shortfall in the face of ever-increasing demand for cyber expertise and cyber professionals.

Section 2165 (b) of title 10, United States Code, establishes the CIC in law as a constituent institution of the NDU. The institutionalization of the CIC in code was a deliberate choice of the Congress in recognition of the importance of graduate education in the complex disciplines involved in cyber and information warfare. As such, it is our expectation that any action to eliminate, subsume into another college, or institutionally diminish the CIC would require a change in law or prior explicit congressional approval.

We understand that — while a final decision surrounding the CIC is yet to be announced and no legislative proposal has been delivered to the Congress — some CIC faculty have already left and potential students are not applying to CIC programs due to the uncertainty surrounding the future of the CIC. It greatly concerns us that the NDU appears to have encouraged this uncertainty and attenuation, failed to respect the Congress’ intent and institutionalization of the CIC in law and may not be able to restore that lost expertise and capability. In view of that, we expect to work with you, the Joint Staff, and the President of NDU to make sure that this avoidable gap in professional military and civilian education is promptly addressed.

Maintaining and growing the College of Information and Cyberspace in the NDU is critical for our shared educational objectives. Doing so sends the appropriate message to our peer competitors that we will remain at the forefront of emergent warfighting domains.

Sincerely,



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

/s/ James R. Langevin
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress