

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
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CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE COAST  
GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION



**Duncan Hunter**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**50th District, California**

April 5, 2016

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The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

From 1989 to 2011, Naval Special Warfare (NSW) relied on the institutionalized training system of Close Quarters Defense (CQD), providing SEALs with training to be most effective during operations and combat. CQD was implemented at all levels of SEAL training, from Basic Underwater Demolition and SEAL Qualification Training to more advanced courses for operational members within NSW. In 2011, NSW's relationship with CQD was abruptly terminated in favor of alternative Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) training.

I have concerns with the process for considering and awarding the contracts that have led to the removal of CQD from SEAL training. I also have concerns with consistent reports that MMA training is not conducive to SEAL operations. Alternatively, NSW operators and leadership have consistently determined CQD to be the most operationally effective training to prepare SEALs for combat, evidenced by more than 11,000 positive critiques and numerous complimentary reports. And on average, the cost to NSW for CQD was \$345 per SEAL compared to \$2,900 for MMA training, underscoring the value of CQD to not just NSW, but to U.S. taxpayers.

In one instance, it was stated within NSW that the MMA training program "came about not at the insistence of the operators, but as a business venture involving active duty and retired SEALs setting themselves up with a contract replacing CQD... The driving force behind getting CQD ousted as [a] program are vanity and money. All of the enemies of CQD today were former fans. The driving forces behind getting rid of it are seeking a Navy contract and the operators who don't know the difference simply regurgitate the lies that the "bad guys" tell."

It is also important to note that the Department of Defense Inspector General conducted a review of NSW contracts in 2015. It was determined that based on a random selection of contracts, NSW did not award 9 of 35 service contracts in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations. To my knowledge, the contract in question was not considered. Overall, the IG report reveals errors in contracting that surely translate into other contract agreements across NSW.

As a result, it is my firm belief that contracting decisions involving the transition from CQD to MMA must be thoroughly reviewed, to include any personal interests and relationships that could have created conflicts of interests in the selection process. A review should also include all instances of open competition between CQD and alternative systems, with specific focus on NSW solicitations in 2003 and 2009. I also ask that you provide me with the full results of these competitions and any reports and documentation that were generated as a result.

Mr. Secretary, resolving this issue or providing the proper clarity is important given the retirement of Rear Admiral Brian Losey as commander of NSW. Again, I ask that you review this situation immediately, due to the impending NSW command transition, and provide me with the full results of all open competitions that involved CQD.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Duncan Hunter", is written over the typed name.

Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress