THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS ANNOUNCES NEW TASK FORCE ON DEFENSE TRANSITION IN CITIES

PHOENIX MAYOR GREG STANTON TO SERVE AS TASK FORCE CHAIR

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) today announced the establishment of a new task force to work with U.S. cities as the nation shifts from combat roles in Iraq and Afghanistan to a new defense strategy that may produce reductions in defense spending and base closures/realignments. Phoenix (AZ) Mayor Greg Stanton will serve as chair of the new Defense Transition in U.S. Cities task force.

In this year’s State of the Union address, President Obama called for a “new defense strategy that ensures we maintain the finest military in the world, while saving nearly half a trillion dollars in our budget.” The President said we should “take the money we’re no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home.”

In response to President Obama’s proposal, members of the new task force will work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, other top Administration officials, and defense industry leaders to manage the profound effects on cities expected from the transition from a large-scale traditional military force to a smaller more flexible and mobile force.

“The nation’s cities will be affected, directly and indirectly, by the transition that is occurring in this nation’s approach to national defense,” USCM President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa wrote in his letter appointing Mayor Stanton to chair the new panel. “In this current climate of change, managing the human and economic impact of reduced military/industrial activity or a smaller military presence in and around cities must be recognized as a national goal that is shared by The Department of Defense and the local governments affected.”

The Conference of Mayors anticipates that the initial meeting of the task force will be held during its 80th annual meeting, June 13-16 in Orlando.

"We must never lose focus on how important it is to attract high-wage jobs to Phoenix, while fiercely protecting the jobs we have," Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton said. "As chair of this task force, I will work hard with mayors across the country to ensure that if cuts to the Defense budget are made, they are done so in a thoughtful manner that protects jobs and our nation’s security."

"We welcome Mayor Stanton as Chair of the Mayors' Task Force on Defense Transition," said Tom Cochran, USCM CEO and Executive Director. "Mayor Stanton brings new energy and new leadership to the defense transition issue as we enter this new era. We look forward to his leadership as mayors around the country lead the charge to make cities more efficient and maximize opportunities for local workforces."

About The U.S. Conference of Mayors: The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,210 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor. Find us on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors (www.usmayors.org).