

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi  
Chairman  
BRAC Commission  
The Polk Building, Suite 600 and 625  
2521 South Clark Street  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We encourage you to rescind the recent Department of Defense (DoD) recommendation to the BRAC Commission moving the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's F-15 aircraft from the Portland Air National Guard Base to New Orleans, Louisiana and Atlantic City, New Jersey. We believe it compromises the security of the Northwestern United States.

The President's National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy all recognize that our first priority must be to protect the homeland. The 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing in Portland currently protects 11 million American citizens in the Pacific Northwest. Its present position allows them to provide continuous air defense and air superiority capabilities from northern California to Canada, a range no other base in the area can cover. Reducing this region's capacity for response from fifteen F-15s to two is a dangerous proposal that exposes citizens of the Pacific Northwest to unnecessary risk.

The 9-11 Commission recommended that the United States fund an increase reserve presence within this growing Pacific Northwest region. Under the BRAC recommendations, the Northwest is the only region of the country that would realize a reduction in air defense capability; lowering its response capability below September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 levels.

The Pacific Northwest's large population centers are forecast to face substantial growth in the coming decade. Already, the region experiences hundreds of international aircraft departing, landing or flying over the airspace on a daily basis; including the majority of trans-Pacific maritime routes. Further, the Pacific Northwest is the only region of the country within missile range of Pacific-rim threat nations, making air defense capability critical to the Homeland Security mission of the entire country. The proposed reduction to two fighter jets on alert makes it virtually impossible to provide sufficient protection of the region.

Additionally, no data has been provided to support the potential for cost savings from the recommended realignment, nor have we been apprised of what data was used to craft this recommendation. On average, the Air National Guard fighter units are 10% more efficient than the active components and the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing is 20% more efficient.

The Air National Guard also stands to lose a highly skilled labor force of pilots and maintenance personnel as they will not likely move with the aircraft. This has the potential to increase the cost of additional training. In fact, we have been presented with analysis that

suggests the recommended realignment will come at an overall cost to taxpayers of \$1.6 million dollars. We urge the Commission to carefully consider accurate and comprehensive data with regard to the full cost of this training recommendation and to provide us with that complete data.

We acknowledge your job is difficult and the need for adjusting fiscal investments into initiatives that will produce a stronger defense. However, we do not believe that realignment of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing accomplishes that goal. The BRAC recommendation to move the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing from Portland, Oregon is not cost effective and compromises the homeland security of the entire Pacific Northwest. For these reasons, we urge you to reject the BRAC realignment proposal.

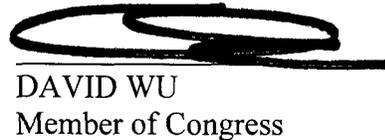
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
DARLENE HOOLEY  
Member of Congress

  
PETER DeFAZIO  
Member of Congress

  
EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress

  
DAVID WU  
Member of Congress





STATE OF WASHINGTON  
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June 6, 2005

Members, 2005 Defense Base Realignment  
and Closure Commission  
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your dedicated service on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), and for this opportunity to provide input on behalf of the citizens of the state of Washington. I have carefully reviewed the recommendations of the Secretary of Defense for this round of proposed base realignment and generally support the Secretary's overall recommendations. I do, however, have two serious concerns about the impact these proposals will have upon our Air National Guard and our national defense.

The first concern has to do with the removal of unit-equipped KC-135 aircraft from Washington's 141<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Wing at Fairchild Air Force Base and the proposed elimination of unit-equipped aircraft from other Air National Guard units in a significant number of other states and territories. Such actions would substantially diminish our capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks and other catastrophic domestic emergencies. Removing the unit-equipped KC-135 aircraft would eliminate my ability to employ them – at state expense – to move quick reaction forces for the protection of citizens and critical infrastructure or to rapidly transport personnel and supplies to where they are most needed during a man-made or natural disaster.

My second concern is the Air Force's plan to dramatically reduce primary assigned air defense fighter aircraft in the Pacific Northwest. Specifically, it would remove permanently stationed air sovereignty alert fighter aircraft at Portland International Airport and sixteen KC-135R Air Refueling aircraft from Fairchild AFB and Portland. If enacted, these actions would substantially diminish the air defense of the state of Washington and all surrounding states vis-à-vis the capabilities that existed on September 11, 2001. At that time, 15 permanently assigned air sovereignty F-15s were stationed at Portland and 58 permanently assigned KC-135R refueling aircraft were stationed at Fairchild AFB. Nearly all of these aircraft were brought to an immediate response posture to protect Washington and the other Northwest states during this national emergency. As you are aware, the 9-11 Commission investigation found that terrorists had planned as many as ten aerial attack missions that day, including several West Coast targets. During this national emergency, the permanently assigned fighter interceptor and air refueling aircraft currently on the cutting board provided airborne protection to Washington's nuclear



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facilities, dams, cities, ports, and other critical facilities in a very short period of time. If the Air Force's BRAC recommendations are approved, our protection from air assault would be less than half of what it was when we were attacked on September 11<sup>th</sup>. It certainly would degrade our state's ability to surge to a higher state of alert and to sustain air sovereignty operations for the duration of an elevated threat period.

I appreciate your careful consideration of the issues raised in this letter. These concerns also have been expressed by members of our congressional delegation and others who have submitted formal input for the record, and by our Adjutant General Timothy Lowenberg. They also will be reiterated by Major General Frank Scoggins in his oral and written testimony to the Commission at its regional hearing on June 17.

The people of Washington are justifiably proud of our state's role in contributing to the national defense and acknowledge our shared role in effecting homeland security. Our State is uniquely qualified for this task. Washington's diverse geography makes it ideally suited for the advanced training and basing of our nation's military services. Our location makes us an essential power projection platform from which to assure America's influence throughout the world, especially throughout the Pacific Rim. We have a vibrant economic infrastructure, a highly educated work force, and patriotic state and community leaders dedicated to ensuring the success of our country's military missions, now and well into the next century. As one indication of local support for our Armed Forces, the Washington State Legislature has adopted land use laws and other legislation designed to assure strong support for our military installations and for the military members, civilian employees, and dependents who live, work, and raise their families in our state. We stand ready to do even more.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and for your selfless service in undertaking the responsibility you bear as a member of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 15, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
BRAC 2005 Independent Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to request the Commission conduct a hearing on the Air Force's proposal to turn 23 Air National Guard bases into "enclaves". As we understand it, enclaves are bases that will entirely lose their flying units but are expected to retain Expeditionary Combat Support units. At this time, we do not know of any existing enclave bases and do not believe the concept has been examined by anyone outside the Pentagon. We are very concerned for several reasons.

First, it is not clear that an enclave base can sustain expeditionary combat units. Once flying units are removed from the enclave bases, many will no longer be able to support military or civilian aircraft operations. Even in cases where there is a civilian landing area, the loss of rated firefighters will lead many shared airports to lose FAA ratings and fail to meet minimal Air Force and civilian criteria for landing and loading. This will make quick deployments to new locations difficult as units like security police, civil engineers, and communications teams normally deploy with a decent amount of equipment and weaponry. That equipment and weaponry must be moved to airports that can receive and secure them, delaying deployments.

In addition to the basic logistics, it is not at all clear that Expeditionary Combat Support personnel will stay in Air Guard units that do not have airplanes or regular contact with air operations. Recruiting new personnel for the Air Guard will also be made more difficult. Essentially, the "air" is being taken out of the Air Guard that these individuals joined or look to join. Retention and recruitment are also concerns for those who work on and fly the planes that will leave the enclaves. These are some of our most experienced and skilled maintainers and crews. Particularly in cases where there will be no nearby unit within 50, or even 250, miles, the Air Force and the nation will lose these experienced professionals. Recent experience with the B-1B supports this concern. GAO's September 2002 analysis (GAO-02-846) pointed out,

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
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Air Force officials did not conduct a formal analysis to assess how a reduction in B-1B bombers from 93-60 would affect DOD's ability to meet wartime requirements. Nor did they complete a comprehensive analysis of potential basing options to know whether they were choosing the most cost-effective alternative....As a result, the Air Force understated the potential savings for some options...Our comparison of active and Guard units' missions, flying hour costs, and capabilities showed that active and Guard units were responsible for substantially the same missions but Guard units had lower flying hour costs and higher mission capable rates than their active duty counterparts.

Given the on-going war effort, it is critical that we have a better understanding of the possible retention impacts of creating enclaves.

Second, we are concerned that this is an effort to get around the BRAC process. The Air Force has indicated that these bases will be kept in anticipation of follow-on missions. At the same time, they plan to shrink the facilities. We have seen no evidence that the Air Force has made any adjustments to its budgeting policies to make enclaves work. Normal budgeting is done by allocating funds for an installation based on the personnel and missions it supports. For a base without a mission and greatly reduced personnel, the current system would provide minimal funds. It would then appear that such bases would have shrunk so much that they could not accommodate the growth required for a follow-on mission that might be available two, three, or more years down the road. So, in reality, these enclaves are closures that will happen slowly and without following the BRAC process.

Last, we are concerned that enclaves simply will not meet the homeland security needs of governors. We have heard that originally the 23 enclave bases were going to be closures. It is our understanding that the Air Force belatedly recognized that this would dramatically reduce the ability of governors to meet their homeland security needs. Their solution was to create enclave bases. Yet, we have not seen any evidence that enclaves will actually serve the needs of governors. As we have not seen all of the Air Force data yet, we can only raise this as a point to be investigated. While each state has a different overall situation, we do not believe that enclave bases will provide the governors with what they really need for homeland security.

We hope that the Commission will hold a hearing specifically on the enclave concept. Nowhere in the BRAC legislation is enclave mentioned as an option. At this point, we have heard a lot of generalizations, but seen little analysis to support this new concept. If it is a good idea, that can only become clear through a thorough investigation of the Air Force's plans and rationale in a public hearing.

Thank you for your service on this critical Commission. If we can answer any questions regarding our concerns, please let us know or have your staff contact our staff.

Sincerely,

  
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June 15, 2005  
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Tom Payne

Robert C. Byrd

Richard Shelby

C. H. Sun

Max Baucus

Frank R. Lautenberg

John Chafee

Jay Byrnes

Henry Hyde

Barack Obama

Allen S. Boyd

Ne. Coleman

Dick Durbin

Mark Dayton

Jeff Sessions

Rick Santorum

Blanche L. Lincoln

Marcel Boyer

Byron D. Louderback

Samuel Alito

Mike DeWine

Jim Inhofe

George V. Voinovich

Ron Wyden

For your reference, here is a typed list of the 26 Senators who signed the letter:

Biden	Bond
Carper	Byrd
Shelby	Smith
Baucus	Lautenberg
Corzine	Rockefeller
Conrad	Obama
Specter	Coleman
Durbin	Dayton
Sessions	Santorum
Lincoln	Pryor
Dorgan	Burns
DeWine	Talent
Voinovich	Wyden

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi  
Chairman  
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

First, we would like to thank you for your work on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. The difficult task that you and the Commission members are undertaking is critical for the future of our nation's military. We appreciate your willingness to serve our nation in this capacity.

We believe that the Defense Secretary's BRAC recommendations largely recognize the important military assets we have in the Northwest. Our distinctive geography, unique military assets and dedicated servicemen and servicewomen, combine to position Northwest facilities as highly valuable for our nation's security.

However, we have some questions and concerns about the implementation of the proposed Joint Base Lewis-McChord and the proposed reduction in jobs affiliated with McChord AFB. While we applaud the Department of Defense's willingness to better leverage local assets and improve efficiency through joint basing, the lack of detailed information about the proposal has made it difficult to truly evaluate the merits of this proposal.

As the Commission considers the Defense Department's proposals, we urge you to seek clarification on a number of critical points:

**What is the correct number of position cuts at McChord AFB?** As you are aware, on May 13, 2005, the Department of Defense released its list of proposed closures and realignments of military installations. That list proposed 567 positions at McChord Air Force Base (424 military billets, 136 civilian positions and 7 net mission contractors). Recently, however, Senator Maria Cantwell received an e-mail from the Air Force listing the job reductions related to realignment at McChord as 629. Clarification is needed as to what the actual recommended number of job reductions related to McChord within the joint-basing initiative is.

**How was this number derived? What functions are recommended to be combined and what is the basis for expected efficiencies? Which jobs specifically are recommended for elimination?** To date, we have been unable to learn how the Defense Department developed this job reduction proposal. We have spoken with the commanders of both Fort Lewis and McChord AFB, as well as members of Air Mobility Command, none of whom have a sense of how this figure was derived. The figure appears to be driven entirely by a small number of individuals

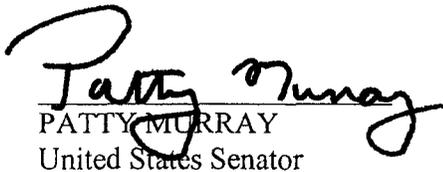
within the Pentagon, making it difficult to evaluate the process by which the figure was developed.

We have also been unable to obtain clarification as to which positions would be eliminated under joint basing. Without clarification on this point, it is impossible to determine the merits of the Department's joint basing proposal, especially in terms of its impact on mission readiness.

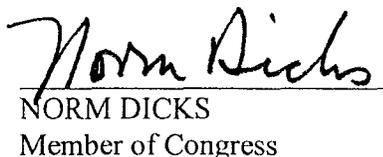
**What is the impact of the proposed job reduction on mission readiness?** As noted above, it is difficult to answer this question without clarification on how the job reduction number was derived or which positions are proposed for elimination. However, it is worth noting that the proposed cuts at McChord have the potential of affecting not only the administration of the base, but also the administration of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing's mission. As you may know, the Army maintains two separate command structures at neighboring Ft. Lewis: a garrison command for oversight of the base and its functions, and a mission command for oversight over the units deployed from the base. The Air Force, on the other hand, combines both garrison command and mission command within the same structure at McChord AFB: the 62<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing. Cuts in the administration of the base may have the unintended consequence of cutting into the administration of the air mobility mission of the Wing. While local Air Force personnel agree that some efficiencies might be achieved through jointness (such as in the area of contracting), they have also informed me that given the high operations tempo at McChord AFB, they do not know how 567 positions can be eliminated at McChord AFB without affecting their ability to carry out their mission.

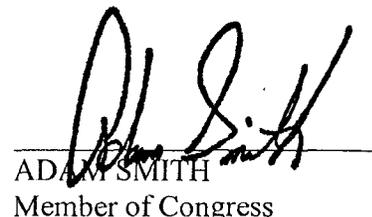
With these questions in mind, we respectfully request that you carefully examine the Joint Base Lewis-McChord proposal and its impact on the air mobility mission. Like the Commission, we want to ensure that our nation is well positioned to protect itself from external threats and that its Armed Forces have the appropriate manpower they need to fulfill their mission. We look forward to working with you to implement the current base realignment and closure round to ensure the improved security of the United States.

Sincerely,

  
PATTY MURRAY  
United States Senator

  
MARIA CANTWELL  
United States Senator

  
NORM DICKS  
Member of Congress

  
ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress