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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

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June 24, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on April 21, 2005. As Puerto Rico's sole representative in Congress, I am writing to express satisfaction with the Department of Defense recommendations to consolidate Reserve Component facilities throughout Puerto Rico and to preserve the operations of Ft. Buchanan as a military installation for the Army Reserve.

I understand that this recommendation will enhance our national security, improve homeland defense and training, and the Army's deployment capability. It is clear to me that the Department of Defense has taken into account the thousands of Puerto Ricans who have voluntarily fought to defend democracy and the principles of freedom, equality and justice for which our nation stands.

As I mentioned back to you back in April, Ft. Buchanan is essential for maintaining more than 14,000 reserve forces in the Island, this being the only fully bilingual force in the U.S. Army. The base also supports approximately 14,000 military retirees and disabled veterans utilizing different facilities and services. In addition, at least 23 federal agencies are supported on the base and nearly 2,000 students attend the base's consolidated school. It is estimated that Ft. Buchanan supports a population of nearly 105,000 U.S. citizens. Not only that, but as the last major military installation in Puerto Rico, Ft. Buchanan plays a critical role in recruiting and retaining servicemen and women.

I look forward to continue working with you, and I am confident of your support on an issue that is of the utmost importance, not just for the 4 million U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico, but for our Nation as a whole.

Sincerely,

Luis G. Fortuño
Member of Congress