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NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4709**

July 5<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,

Thank you again for your continued leadership on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. I commend you and your fellow commissioners on undertaking this difficult task that is so critical for the future of our nation's military.

I write to you today, once again, to call your attention to concerns surrounding the Pentagon's Joint Base Lewis-McChord proposal and the projected reduction in jobs affiliated with McChord AFB. Last week, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on the Defense Department's BRAC recommendations that reiterated the concerns that my fellow Washington State Congressional Delegation Members and I have expressed in a letter to you regarding the implementation of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord proposal. These concerns are shared by the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and others.

The GAO report, entitled "Military Bases: Analysis of DoD's 2005 Selection Process and Recommendations for Base Closures and Realignments," warns of the challenges ahead with the implementation of the Pentagon's joint base concept. Based upon visits to both McChord AFB and Ft. Lewis and discussions with base officials about the joint proposal, the GAO concluded that "concerns over obstacles such as seeking efficiencies at the expense of the mission, could jeopardize a smooth and successful implementation of the recommendation" (p. 29). The report goes on to cite the Air Force's concerns that "most military personnel at McChord are mission critical and deployable, increasing the difficulty to identify possible Air Force military personnel reductions" (p. 161).

Furthermore, in assessing the McChord-Ft. Lewis plan and other Department of Defense joint basing proposals, the GAO reiterated its conclusion from a June 2005 GAO report that called into question the Pentagon's ability to accurately forecast the true personnel needs associated with joint basing initiatives. The report states that "DoD and the military services' ability to forecast base operations support requirements and funding needs has been hindered by the lack of a common terminology for defining base support functions, as well as by the lack of a mature analytic process for developing base support requirements" (p. 161-2).

I urge you to take special note of the GAO's conclusions as you assess the Pentagon's McChord-Ft. Lewis proposal, particularly as they relate to the DoD's job loss projections at McChord AFB. While I am not opposed to the Pentagon's efforts to better leverage local assets and improve efficiency through joint basing, I believe the BRAC Commission and Congress must carefully scrutinize the DoD's recommendations in order to ensure that military readiness is not compromised. With that in mind, I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming months to implement the current BRAC round.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Smith", written over a horizontal line.

ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress