



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEDIA BRIEFING BOOK

GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA REGIONAL HEARING

GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, ND

- A. Media Advisory
- B. Suggested Talking Points for Installation Visit
- C. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- D. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC



Media Advisory – Grand Forks, ND

TIME:

Doors Open to Public at 7:00AM

Hearing Coverage- Chester Fritz Auditorium, University of North Dakota

8:30AM – 11:30AM / PRE-SET 6:00AM

Media Availability – Lower Level Rehearsal Room of the Chester Fritz Auditorium

As each State completes its presentation, it will hold a media availability.

The BRAC Commission's media availability will begin promptly 15 minutes after the end of the hearing.

Logistical information for media:

-Satellite truck parking available on west side of building

-1000 ft. Cable run to press risers

-90 ft. Max camera throw

-TV quality sound and lighting

-Wireless internet available for \$35

Credentialing and Media Inquiries:

Contact: Robert McCreary, robert.mccreary@wso.whs.mil

Deputy Director of Communications

Please provide name and affiliation in request



DCN: 4853

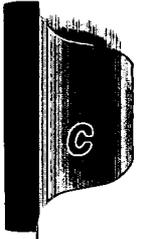
**2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points Regarding Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota**

- 1. The Congress established the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) to perform an independent evaluation of the suggestions made by the Department of Defense (DoD) to close or realign various bases across the country. The Commission will follow a process set out by law, and while considering all critical contributing factors, will base its final decision regarding Grand Forks AFB almost entirely upon military value.**
 - The Commission will perform an independent evaluation, through an open and transparent process which has been prescribed by law, of Grand Forks AFB, placing a priority on military value.
 - While the strategy to meet modern global threats is under the purview of DoD, the task of the Commission is to ensure that DoD has made its suggestions according to law, and that all pertinent factors have been taken into account.
 - The Commission recognizes the important role that Grand Forks AFB has played in various independent missions over the past half-century. From housing nuclear missile silos and strategic bombers to its current role as a base for the 319th Air Refueling Wing. While many, if not all military installations have made value contributions to the defense of the United States, the Commission will evaluate the current military value of the installations.

- 2. The Commission will perform an independent, thorough, and transparent evaluation, as prescribed by law before coming to its conclusions.**
 - The Commission will carefully analyze the proposed role that Grand Forks AFB as a base for squadrons of UAVs. A new technology available to the United States' military, UAVs provide Grand Forks AFB a unique opportunity to serve at the forefront of the nation's changing homeland defense/homeland security efforts.

- 3. The Commission understands the human impact that the suggestion to realign Grand Forks AFB could have, and will take the economic effects into careful account.**
 - While military value is the preeminent consideration, the Commission will also evaluate, as prescribed by law, the economic, environmental, and other effects that the realignment would have on the community, and welcomes community input in this process.
 - The Commission understands the effect that DoD's suggestion to realign the base could have on the local economy and will perform a careful economic analysis before coming to its conclusions, which will be based almost entirely upon military value.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.



**2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Qs and As Regarding Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota**

Q1. Grand Forks Air Force Base (AFB) has had a long history. Over the past 50 years the base has had multiple missions and has housed various bombers, nuclear missile silos, and strategic refueling aircraft. Will the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) take its past to our country's defense into account as the Commission makes its evaluations?

A1. The Congress established the BRAC Commission as an independent entity to perform a thorough, accurate, and transparent evaluation of the Department of Defense's (DoD) suggestions to close or realign bases across the country. The process followed by the Commission has been specifically prescribed by law. Though the Commission will take economic, environmental, and other potential effects that the DoD suggestions could have if enacted, the most important consideration to the Commission will be the present military value of the base. The Commission understands the vitally important role that most, if not all, bases across the country have played in our nation's defense, but as the DoD seeks to streamline our military to ensure its ability to meet changing global threats, the Commission will ensure that the decisions to close or realign installations have been made only after a comprehensive evaluation and in accordance with the law.

Q2. According to information provided by the DoD, Grand Forks AFB ranked lowest in military value of all KC-135 tanker bases. What criteria will the Commission use to analyze the "military value" of the installation?

A2. The statute establishes the criteria. As outlined by the statute, the Commission will place priority on military value; while also taking into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of an installation would have on the community surrounding that base. Part of what has constituted DoD's strategic determination of military value has been jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in today's changing global threats.

Q3. If the DoD recommendations are carried out and Grand Forks AFB receives several squadrons of Predator and Global Hawk UAVs, does this suggest that the base might also receive future X-45C and X-47B Joint Unmanned Combat Air Systems (J-UCAS) now in the early stages of development?

A3. The Commission's purpose is to help ensure that the US military is best able to meet changing global threats by being as streamlined and efficient as possible. The Commission will not make predictions as to potential future roles of the installation.

Q4. Worst-case scenarios estimate that direct and indirect job loss at Grand Forks could total 5,000 jobs. Such a figure would have an apparently severe economic impact on the region and could affect schools, community groups, colleges, small businesses, and church groups. Will the Commission consider the long-term economic impact of the DoD BRAC recommendations?

A4. While the Commission will take the economic, environmental, and other effects that the realignment of Grand Forks AFB would have on the surrounding community, the

final decision of the Commission will be made based almost entirely upon the military value of the installation, as prescribed by law. Ensuring our nation's defense, by making our military more streamlined and efficient is the number one priority of the Commission. While DoD creates the strategies to best meet changing global threats, the Commission was created by the Congress to ensure that suggestions to close or realign a base have been made in accordance with the law and that all key factors have been fully evaluated.

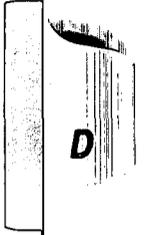
Q5. Was Grand Forks chosen as a potential UAV-basing installation because of training opportunities that mirror potential operations in theaters such as North Korea?

A5. This is a question regarding military strategy and is outside of the scope of the Commission. The Commission was created to analyze the recommendations of the Department of Defense and to ensure adherence to certain prescribed laws. Questions regarding strategy are under the purview of the Department of Defense.

Q6. The BRAC recommendations suggest that UAV launch-and-recovery teams be stations at Grand Forks AFB while Hector International Airport Air Guard Station in Fargo would house ground control (pilots) and intelligence analysis functions. Will the Commission consider the broader ramifications of this recommendation as the two installations would likely merge some installation functions, such as public affairs?

A6. The Commission will perform a thorough, accurate, and objective analysis which will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider other factors. The ability of the community/neighboring installation to support a new mission is very important. The Commission recognized that the current recommendations have broader ramifications for Grand Forks AFB and Hector IAP Air Guard Station. Please be assured that the Commission will make a full evaluation, as prescribed by law, before coming to its conclusions and formulating its suggestions.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.



GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE NORTH DAKOTA

National Articles

Critical Intelligence: North Dakota To Get Predators, Global Hawks Over next Few Years

Eielson key to Air Force Future Total Force

Local Articles

Leaders Lobby to Maintain Air Base

Group goes to D.C. to tout merits of air base; Community meeting planned next week

Fargo officials preparing for base closing committee

N.D. bases narrowly escaped closure

Going to the source; North Dakota leaders consult with Air Force, National Guard officials in preparation for June 23 BRAC hearing

Air Force documents indicate cold an advantage in base recommendations

Trends in the Region: Midwest Fights BRAC Cuts While Considering Site Reuse.

BASE CLOSURE: Mission in writing

Hoeven says Washington visit isn't political

Air Force plans 'family' of UAVs in North Dakota

Grand Forks looking for money to deal with base change impacts

GFAFB: BRAC in the back yard

Editorial Articles

Say yes to BRAC

OUR OPINION: Together at last: GF, Fargo

National Articles

Critical Intelligence: North Dakota To Get Predators, Global Hawks Over next Few Years

Inside the Pentagon

June 16, 2005

The Air Force is taking advantage of a series of recent decisions affecting two air bases in North Dakota to further develop its unmanned aerial vehicle program, while at the same time expanding the reach of a new directorate and increasing its homeland defense profile, Inside the Air Force reports.

The service has plans to retire the 119th Fighter Wing of F-16s at Hector International Airport Air Guard Station, ND. The Defense Department recently announced it would transfer all active-duty KC-135 tanker aircraft now based at **Grand Forks** Air Force Base, ND, to four other bases in the United States as part of its 2005 base closure and **realignment** plan. According to the plan, **Grand Forks** ranked lowest in military value of all active-duty KC-135 tanker bases. But the base ranked highest in military value for the service's UAV mission, according to BRAC documents.

Those two moves, coupled with an increasing focus on homeland defense, have lead the Air Force to view both North Dakota installations as prime sites for a "family of UAVs" that would include squadrons of Predators and Global Hawks, service officials said this month. The decision also will expand the service's portfolio of total force initiatives aimed at better integrating its active, Guard and Reserve components.

"First, we will replace the F-16 mission with what we call an 'active associate' Predator unit, which means the Guard will retain primary responsibility for the UAVs and an active-duty unit will work with them," Lt. Gen. Stephen Wood, deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, told reporters at a June 3 Pentagon briefing. **WALSH SAYS TWO VIRGINIA-CLASS SUBS PER YEAR WILL MAINTAIN 40-SUB FORCE:** Rear Adm. Joseph Walsh, the Navy's director of submarine warfare, says even if the service starts buying two Virginia-class submarines annually -- a budgetary feat that is chronically postponed -- the attack sub force will drop from 54 to 40 by 2028, reports Inside the Navy.

The Navy has been buying one Virginia-class sub annually, each costing about \$2.4 billion, he said. The Navy's fiscal year 2006 budget request delayed plans to start buying two annually from FY-09 to FY-12, Walsh said June 8 at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Alexandria, VA. While FY-12 is outside the scope of the budget request, advance procurement money is budgeted in FY-10 and FY-11 for two subs in FY-12, he told reporters.

"We're on a glide slope to reach 40 ships," he said.

But the Navy first has to find a way to afford buying two ships annually, which it has been unable to do in recent budget cycles. Walsh said submarines traditionally have taken up about a third of the shipbuilding budget. If the unit cost of the Virginia subs decrease from about \$2.4 billion to \$2 billion and the annual shipbuilding budget grows from \$10 billion to \$12 billion, then buying two subs annually might be possible, he said. **HOUSE APPROPRIATORS, WORRIED BY FCS PLANS, CUT \$400 MILLION IN FY-06 BILL:** The House Appropriations Committee last week closely followed the recommendations of House authorizers, cutting \$400 million from the defense budget request for the Future Combat System, Inside the Army reports.

An additional \$50 million was moved out of an account for manned ground vehicle development and placed in a separate account to develop the first of eight vehicles in that family -- the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon. The panel approved its version of the fiscal year 2006 defense appropriations bill June 7.

When asked June 2 for his reaction to the major cuts proposed by House authorizers, Lt. Gen. Joseph Yakovac, the Army's military deputy to the civilian acquisition chief, said only that the decision is in the hands of four committees -- not one.

According to a the House appropriators' report on their bill, "the committee harbors serious concerns about the FCS program." Not only does the committee worry about the program itself, but it "has deep concerns about whether there will be sufficient funding available in the coming years" to afford both FCS as well as the service's plans for a modular, brigade-based force, the report said. **RUMSFELD, NORWEGIAN COUNTERPART INK NEW AGREEMENT ON MARINE GEAR:** Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his Norwegian counterpart, Kristin Krohn Devold, have signed a memorandum of understanding to continue and revamp a Cold War-era program that put U.S. Marine Corps gear in Norway to defend against a Soviet invasion, Inside the Navy reports.

The memorandum, which supersedes a 1981 agreement that created the program, was signed June 8 during Rumsfeld's visit to Norway. The pact ensures the Marine Corps will continue to store weapons and equipment in six man-made caves in Norway, but also indicates U.S. and Norwegian officials will retool the program to focus on global missions.

In recent years, the program has been used to support operations in distant places such as the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. While the revamped program will still support Norway's defense, it will also be tailored to support other kinds of Marine Corps missions, including humanitarian relief operations, non-combatant evacuations, disaster-relief and counter-proliferation work.

Just as the purpose of the program is shifting to a more global focus, the name of the program has switched from the Norwegian Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade to the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway. **HOUSE LAWMAKERS RECOMMEND TERMINATING JASSM PROGRAM:** The House Appropriations Committee is recommending the termination of the Air Force's Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile program, which has been experiencing significant testing complications for more than a year, reports Inside the Air Force.

Citing continuing "grave concerns" with the viability of the stealthy cruise missile, the committee, in its fiscal year 2006 defense spending bill, zeroed the Air Force's procurement funding request for JASSM and recommended the cancellation of the program, according to the report accompanying the bill. The legislation was approved by the committee June 7.

In recent years, the missile program has had a rough time gaining ample congressional support. During deliberations over the FY-05 defense bill, lawmakers threatened to introduce large cuts to the program due to concerns over the missile's reliability as displayed in several tests, but a last-minute Air Force and Lockheed Martin effort to inform lawmakers of testing fixes and a tight contractual deal preserved the bulk of the funding for the program.

The FY-05 Defense Appropriations Act allocates about \$140 million to procure 303 JASSMs. The account is about \$8 million and 57 missiles short of the Air Force's original request due to lawmakers' concerns over a "troublesome" mission success rate during operational testing, according to the conference report on the legislation. Members of Congress attributed their cuts in part to an April 2004 Office of the Secretary of Defense operational test and evaluation report that raised doubts about the missile's reliability. **CONGRESS TOLD JROC HAS APPROVED LIGHT UTILITY HELICOPTER REQUIREMENTS:** The Defense Department recently notified Capitol Hill that the Joint Requirements Oversight Council has approved the capabilities development document and key performance parameters for the Light Utility Helicopter program, according to officials.

Approval of the CDD paves the way for a LUH request for proposals.

In a memorandum signed June 1 by Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the JROC designates the Army as the lead component and the approval authority for changes to the CDD that will not impact the KPP, a Joint Staff spokeswoman wrote in a June 10 e-mail to Inside the Army. JROC approval of the CDD and KPP were expected, Col. Cory Mahanna, the service's project manager for utility helicopters, told ITA June 10.

Originally envisioned to be deployable into "permissive environments," the Army's future LUH now is expected to be deployed only in U.S.-held territory, Mahanna said earlier this year. If the service were to militarize the platform, additional survivability equipment would have to be

integrated, Paul Bogosian, the Army's program executive officer for aviation, said at the Army Aviation Association of America's annual conference last month. A LUH fleet is expected to free up the heavily used UH-60 Black Hawk for combat operations, as well as replace the UH-1 Huey in the National Guard. **HOUSE APPROPRIATORS PROPOSE CUTS FOR DD(X)**

DESTROYER PROGRAM: The Navy's troubled DD(X) destroyer program was dealt another blow last week when House appropriators endorsed cutting \$1 billion from the program by withholding \$716 million in advance procurement requested in fiscal year 2006 and rescinding \$304 million in FY-05 advance procurement funds, reports Inside the Navy.

In addition to the ship construction funds, the Navy's FY-06 budget request seeks about \$1 billion in research and development funds for the ship. House appropriators recommended providing only \$670 million in DD(X) R&D, but also proposed increasing R&D funding for the CG(X) cruiser, which is supposed to be developed after DD(X), from the \$50 million requested to \$80 million.

Earlier this year, House authorizers similarly slashed funding for DD(X), providing only \$700 million in R&D funds and no ship construction funds. House authorizers also proposed a \$1.7 billion cost cap for the program. The lead ship is estimated to cost \$3.3 billion. If such a cost cap were to become law, it could end the DD(X) program as it exists today, Navy acquisition executive John Young told reporters last month.

But Senate authorizers have taken a different stance on the DD(X) program and will have to sort out their differences with the House in the defense authorization conference. Senate authorizers proposed no cost cap but recommended adding \$50 million in advance procurement to help pay for the construction of the second DD(X) at a second shipyard. The Senate version of the FY-06 defense authorization bill bars the Navy from conducting a winner-take-all competition for DD(X). **HOUSE PANEL INCLUDES \$50 MILLION FOR TERMINATED JOINT COMMON MISSILE:** House appropriators are calling for the revitalization of the terminated Joint Common Missile program, Inside the Army reports.

In its mark-up of the fiscal year 2006 defense spending bill, the House Appropriations Committee approved a measure that would fund continued JCM development with \$50 million in FY-06 -- \$45 million for Army research, development, test and evaluation and \$5 million for Navy RDT&E.

JCM was terminated by the Pentagon last year in program budget decision No. 753, which cut \$2.3 billion in funding that had been earmarked to complete development and buy 2,134 missiles. The Army's share of the cut was \$928 million, the Navy's \$1.5 billion.

In their report on the defense bill, House appropriators pointed to the program's success and said it was the first to pass through the Joint Capabilities Integration and Developments System process, which is aimed at prioritizing requirements from a joint perspective. **HOUSE APPROPRIATORS CUT EELV FUNDING DUE TO EXPECTED SBIRS DELAYS:** The House Appropriations Committee has reduced fiscal year 2006 funding for the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle rocket booster program by \$91 million because lawmakers expect a missile warning system's first satellite launch will be delayed, reports Inside the Air Force.

The Space Based Infrared System High program is "extremely troubled," members of the House Appropriations Committee wrote in a June 7 report accompanying their mark-up of the FY-06 defense spending bill.

"The total estimated cost for the program has increased from \$4 billion to over \$10 billion," they said. "The Air Force has experienced three Nunn-McCurdy breaches in four years and satellite launch dates have slipped repeatedly." The Air Force requested \$838.3 million under the EELV program for three Global Positioning System satellite launches, one SBIRS geosynchronous earth orbit satellite launch and one Defense Meteorological Satellite Program launch. The FY-06 money would fund launches for two years down the road.

"Given the troubled history of this [SBIRS] program, the Committee believes it is highly likely that over the next three and a half years the first SBIRS satellite will experience additional slips," panelists wrote. "A launch delay of just three months would defer the requirement to budget for the launch vehicle to fiscal year 2007. The Committee believes such a delay is highly likely, and has deferred the associated fiscal year 2006 funding accordingly." **FLIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM PROBLEM BLAMED FOR SECOND F/A-22 CRASH:** An Air Force accident investigation board has deemed an inoperative flight control system the culprit behind a late-December F/A-22 crash -- the second Raptor mishap in the program's history, and the second blamed on flight control software issues, Inside the Air Force reports.

On Dec. 20, 2004, an F/A-22 assigned to the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, NV, crashed during takeoff from a runway there. The pilot ejected and suffered minor injuries, but the \$133.3 million aircraft was destroyed.

"Immediately upon leaving the ground, the [mishap aircraft] began a series of uncommanded and progressively more violent yaw, roll, and pitch transients," states the board's executive summary on its findings, released June 8.

The AIB found the culprit behind the accident "was an inoperative flight control system, resulting from a power interruption, which made the [mishap aircraft] uncontrollable," according to its report. **NICHOLS SAYS SCANEAGLE UAV WILL PROVIDE ISR TO 5th FLEET COMMAND:** Vice Adm. David Nichols, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and 5th Fleet, says just as the U.S. military has used the ScanEagle unmanned aerial vehicle to perform intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions in Iraq, the drones will be used in the Persian Gulf to protect Iraqi oil platforms, Inside the Navy reports.

"As you know, the ScanEagle is being used ashore in Iraq by a number of folks right now kind of at the tactical level -- as a tactical level [intelligence], surveillance and reconnaissance tool," Nichols told reporters June 8 via teleconference from Bahrain. "We'll use it for the exact same thing in the northern [Persian] Gulf."

Boeing and The Insitu Group developed the ScanEagle, a small, long-endurance, autonomous UAV which can stay in the air for more than 15 hours to spy on its surroundings. Instead of buying unmanned drones, the Navy is hiring Boeing to temporarily provide the systems and the personnel to operate them.

Two months ago, Naval Air Systems Command awarded a \$14.5 million contract to Boeing to provide persistent ISR unmanned aerial services for naval expeditionary strike deployment and Gulf oil platform security in support of the war in Iraq, according to Capt. Paul Morgan, program manager for unmanned aerial vehicles at Naval Air Systems Command. Boeing is expected to use the ScanEagle UAV to meet the need. **SOFTWARE, HARDWARE UPGRADES ON DECK FOR ARMY BATTLE COMMAND 6.4:** Before the 4th Infantry Division deploys to Iraq later this year, the Army will revise its battle command system based on some of the lessons learned from an operational test conducted during a joint war game at Ft. Hood, TX, in March, reports

Inside the Army.

Those changes will include a number of software and hardware fixes and improvements to the Army Battle Command System 6.4, which were recommended during the 4th ID's field test of the system, according to Col. Harold Greene, project manager for ground combat command and control. After the division deploys to Iraq, Greene's program office will make further acquisition decisions and field a baseline capability to the Army.

"We're going to school on the 4th ID," Greene said, adding that the Joint Red Flag exercise test was the first field test of the system. It also was the first field test conducted by a division that had been reorganized into modular brigades. "We learned things. So we're a learning organization, and we're trying to figure out where we go next."

The service has assembled a "tiger team" that will help the 4th ID make as many changes as possible to ABCS 6.4 during the short time before the division returns to Iraq. The division is scheduled to deploy between August and December of this year.

Eielson key to Air Force Future Total Force

Department of Defense U.S. Air Force Releases
Master Sgt. Mitch Gettle, Air Force Print News

If the Base **Realignment** and Closure recommendations released in May are approved, **Grand Forks** Air Force Base, N.D., and Eielson AFB, Alaska, will see some changes.

Both bases will play a strategic role in the Air Force's Future Total Force plan.

Grand Forks received the highest BRAC score for unmanned aerial vehicles of any Air Force installation within its region.

"**Grand Forks** provides a strategic presence in the north central United States and enjoys proximity to open airspace over sparsely populated areas," said Lt. Gen. Stephen G. Wood, deputy chief of staff for Air Force plans and programs.

"This makes it a highly effective location for our UAVs," General Wood said. "Establishing a cold weather UAV center is necessary to advance training opportunities and system development to ensure these vehicles can operate worldwide. Our strategic vision for **Grand Forks** is to become a home to a 'family of UAVs.'"

The proposed changes will form cooperation between active and Guard components.

"We would establish (an MQ-1) Predator Air National Guard unit at Fargo's Hector Field," General Wood said. "The initial configuration could be a split operation with the ground control and intelligence analysis functions located at a location selected by the North Dakota ANG and with the airframes and launch recovery element located at **Grand Forks**."

Changes at Eielson may also offer the Air Force an opportunity to take advantage of Future Total Force integration initiatives for emerging missions.

"Eielson provides immediate and easy access to a vast airspace and range complex -- a dwindling resource in other United States and overseas locations," General Wood said. "Access to this base is critical to the effective execution of future Cooperative Cope Thunder joint and coalition readiness exercises.

"Keeping Eielson open provides a strategic location to deploy to and operate from in any future contingency," he said.

"Realigning and retaining both these installations affords us the opportunity to take advantage of Future Total Force integration initiatives to capture highly skilled Airmen for emerging mission requirements," said Michael L. Dominguez, acting secretary of the Air Force.

Local Articles

Leaders lobby to maintain air base

Duluth News-Tribune

Chuck Frederick

June 17, 2005

Duluth's air base is too critical to the U.S. military to be run with a reduced staff or without a vital mission.

That's the message city representatives honed Thursday at a meeting with congressional delegates in Washington, D.C.

It's the message they'll deliver next week in **Grand Forks, N.D.**, when Pentagon officials host a community meeting about proposed base closures and military **realignments**. The proposals were announced last month.

"We do have a great game plan for next week," Steve Greenfield, chairman of the board for the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, said via telephone after Thursday's meeting in the nation's capital.

"We talked a great deal about a new mission in Duluth," Mayor Herb Bergson said. "If we can get a stay of execution here, it'll give us a little time to find that new mission."

The Pentagon's recommendations called for fighter jets in Duluth to be retired by 2007 and not replaced. The future role of the city's Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing was left unclear.

In addition to the loss of jets, Air Force recommendations acquired by the News Tribune last week said 583 full-time and traditional Air Guard positions should be eliminated by 2011. That would be a 53 percent reduction in staff for the 148th, the Duluth area's ninth-largest employer. The wing estimates its economic impact on the Northland at \$85.1 million.

But the recommendations weren't based on several key factors, said Gen. Ray Klosowski, former 148th wing commander, former executive director of the Duluth airport and the retired commander of the Minnesota Air National Guard. Klosowski was part of Duluth's eight-member delegation Thursday.

"We got a lot of good points across they weren't aware of," Klosowski said. "I think Duluth has a very strong argument."

Those points, Klosowski said, included:

Duluth's abundance of unobstructed airspace for flight training.

The base's ongoing \$26 million renovation project, including the military's newest aircraft maintenance hangar.

Group goes to D.C. to tout merits of air base; Community meeting planned next week

Duluth News Tribune

Chuck Frederick

June 17, 2005

Duluth air base is too critical to the U.S. military to be run with a reduced staff or without a vital mission. That's the message representatives of the city honed Thursday at a meeting with congressional delegates in Washington, D.C.

It's the message they'll deliver next week in **Grand Forks, N.D.**, when Pentagon officials hold a community meeting about proposed base closures and military **realignments**. The proposals were announced last month.

"We do have a great game plan for next week," Steve Greenfield, chairman of the board for the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, said via telephone after Thursday's meeting in the nation's capital.

"We talked a great deal about a new mission in Duluth," Mayor Herb Bergson said. "If we can get a stay of execution, it'll give us a little time to find that new mission."

The Pentagon's recommendations called for fighter jets in Duluth to be retired by 2007 and not replaced. The future role of the city's Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing is unclear.

In addition to the loss of jets, Air Force recommendations acquired by the Duluth News Tribune last week said 583 full-time and traditional Air Guard positions should be eliminated by 2011. That would be a 53 percent reduction in staff for the 148th, the Duluth area's ninth-largest employer. The wing estimates its economic impact on the Northland at \$85.1 million.

But the recommendations weren't based on several key factors, said Gen. Ray Klosowski, former 148th wing commander, former executive director of the Duluth airport and the retired commander of the Minnesota Air National Guard. Klosowski was part of Duluth's eight-member delegation Thursday.

"We got a lot of good points across they weren't aware of," Klosowski said. "I think Duluth has a very strong argument."

Those points, Klosowski said, included:

* Duluth's abundance of unobstructed airspace for flight training.

* The base's ongoing \$26 million renovation project, including the military's newest aircraft maintenance hangar.

* A new \$3.5 million Naval Reserve Center that could soon be empty. The Pentagon recommended closing the Duluth Naval Reserve Center, a loss of nine full-time jobs.

* Strong recruitment and retention. The Duluth wing is staffed at 103 percent of its recommended levels, Klosowski said.

On Wednesday, a day before the community meeting in **Grand Forks**, members of the 148th will meet with Air National Guard officials at the Pentagon. They're expected to be joined by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Maj. Gen. Larry W. Shellito, the adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard, and others.

"It's going to be a little bit of a one-two punch," Greenfield said.

In addition, U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., is arranging a follow-up breakfast meeting next week with the Northland's congressional representatives, his office said.

Thursday's meeting was attended by U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton, D-Minn.; and representatives of Oberstar; U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minn.; U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis.; and U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis. The Duluth group later met with a representative of U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, D-Wis.

Ultimately, decisions about base closures and military changes will be made by Congress. Even if its jets are retired and not replaced and its membership is reduced, the Duluth Air Base will remain open, according to the Air Force recommendations. Aircraft from other bases would rotate through Duluth and operate from Duluth as assigned by U.S. Northern Command.

"We're pleased our community is fighting for us," Capt. Chris Cloutier said.

Fargo officials preparing for base closing committee

Associated Press State and Local Wire

June 14, 2005

A former commander of the North Dakota National Guard is urging officials to be careful about linking the Guard unit here too closely with **Grand Forks** Air Force Base.

The Pentagon is considering both bases for a new project involving unmanned aerial vehicles, though it also is recommending **Grand Forks** lose its air refueling tankers and Fargo lose its Happy Hooligans fighter jet flying mission.

The federal Base Closing and **Realignment** Commission is holding a hearing in **Grand Forks** on June 23.

Gov. John Hoeven, Fargo Mayor Bruce Furness and Maj. Gen. Michael Haugen, the commander of the North Dakota Guard, plan to lobby for removal of the "no fly" language regarding the 119th Fighter Wing.

Retired Gen. Alexander Macdonald, a former state Guard commander, told officials Tuesday not to limit options in Fargo to an unmanned aerial vehicle mission.

"What if BRAC decided to close **Grand Forks**?" he said. "We've got to be careful that closing **Grand Forks** would not automatically close Fargo because we've tied ourself to that (UAV) mission so wholeheartedly that it destroys our opportunity to have additional aircraft assigned to Fargo in the future."

Fargo's presentation during next week's hearing is to include a video segment from Vice President Dick Cheney thanking the Hooligans for flying cover over the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

N.D. bases narrowly escaped closure

Bismarck Tribune

June 14, 2005

FARGO (AP) -- North Dakota's two Air Force bases and the National Guard base in Fargo appear to have narrowly escaped a Pentagon list of bases recommended for closing.

"It was in the works," said John Marshall, chairman of the **Grand Forks** base retention committee.

"All three North Dakota bases were referenced in closure plans. That is unbelievably scary."

Discussions were held during about 40 meetings since January of the Air Force Base Closure Executive Group, the 22-member committee putting together the Air Force recommendations.

On April 26, less than three weeks before the Pentagon released its base closing and **realignment** plan, Air Force officials recommended closing the **Grand Forks** base, the Forum reported Monday, citing minutes taken during the committee meetings.

Fargo's Air National Guard unit remained a strong candidate for closure until March 31, when the Air Force committee instead discussed **realignment**, the meeting minutes show.

The committee's position on Minot Air Force Base began shifting from closure to **realignment** by February.

Air Force officials at first talked about keeping B-52 bombers in Minot but eliminating the base's missile wing. But, on April 7, they recommended no changes for Minot, meeting minutes show.

Base supporters and the state's congressional delegation said they learned the bases were in jeopardy and were able to lobby for changes that kept them off the closing list.

"We were within an inch, both in **Grand Forks** and Fargo, of getting closed," said Sen. Kent

Conrad, D-N.D.

"Without question, the fact that we had knowledge of what was being discussed was valuable to us," Conrad said. "That is the result of relationships we've developed over many years."

Going to the source; North Dakota leaders consult with Air Force, National Guard officials in preparation for June 23 BRAC hearing

Grand Forks Herald

Elisa L. Rineheart

June 10, 2005

Base retention leaders teamed up Thursday in Washington to talk with National Guard officials and ask, among other things, for feedback on how to address base closure commissioners when they visit **Grand Forks** on June 23.

Gov. John Hoeven, Gen. Michael Haugen, commander of the North Dakota National Guard, and the congressional delegation talked to two top National Guard officials to make the case that Fargo's Air National Guard Base should continue to house a flying mission after the F-16A model retires in 2007.

Hoeven said that possible replacements include a more advanced F-16 fighter jet and the C-27J, a light cargo aircraft being built.

Another option for Fargo is the CASA 295, a similar cargo aircraft. The manufacturers of both aircraft are competing for a contract with the Army National Guard, Haugen said.

An Army National Guard unit stationed in Fargo could operate either one of the tactical airlift planes, he said.

"What we're trying to do here is see what are the possibilities for this type of aircraft without going to the Air Force," Haugen said. "This is an issue of the National Guard."

Haugen said that it was an excellent meeting.

Base retention leaders asked for pointers on how to present their case to the Base Closure and **Realignment** subcommittee, Hoeven said.

They were advised to keep building the North Dakota Air Space Initiative, which promotes the state's uncrowded air space as a safe military training field, he said.

When talking about bringing flying missions to **Grand Forks** and Fargo in addition to the drones, Guard officials acknowledged the need to keep a National Guard flying mission in each state, Hoeven said.

Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., said they pushed for keeping one or two KC-135R Stratotanker squadrons permanently in **Grand Forks**.

Hoeven said Air Force officials, in a later meeting, reminded him that unmanned aerial operations are important growing missions and that other communities have been asking to host them.

Air Force documents indicate cold an advantage in base recommendations

Associated Press State and Local Wire

June 8, 2005

Documents from the Air Force indicate cold weather is an advantage for the **Grand Forks Air Force Base** when it comes to planning its future.

The Pentagon is recommending the base lose its air fueling tankers and most of its personnel, but that the base have a new mission involving unmanned aerial vehicles, known as UAVs.

Acting Air Force Secretary Michael Dominguez and Gen. John Jumper, the Air Force chief of staff, outlined their proposals in a memo and background paper submitted to the federal Base Closing and **Realignment** Commission.

"Establishing a cold weather UAV center is necessary to advance training and system development to ensure these vehicles can be operated worldwide, all weather," the document said.

Having plans in writing from top Air Force brass carries more weight, said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., who called the memo "very positive."

The Air Force officials also said the "vast amounts of airspace over limited populations" make **Grand Forks** suited for the UAV mission, and cited the University of North Dakota aerospace program as another advantage.

Major Gen. Michael Haugen, the state Guard commander, said the Fargo-based 119th Fighter Wing needs a flying mission to help train the pilots for the UAVs. He said Air Force officials indicated the Fargo unit's flying mission was deleted in error.

Without a flying mission, "we are limited in recruiting of pilots, of experience levels for pilots and a career path for pilots," Haugen told the city's base retention committee this week.

Trends in the Region: Midwest Fights BRAC Cuts While Considering Site Reuse.

The Bond Buyer

Carvlin, Elizabeth; Shields, Yvette

June 8, 2006

CHICAGO -- Midwest states are featured prominently on the Department of Defense's recommendations for military base closings and **realignments**, and in coming months they will make their pitches to retain threatened jobs in their communities. But for many, those pitches will eventually have to give way to acceptance and working toward redevelopment of closed or realigned bases.

Some states in the region will be among the hardest hit if the list of closings stays unchanged.

Two states, South Dakota and North Dakota, will absorb about 51% of the loss of military personnel and jobs of all of the domestic bases set for changes, said Mark Johnston, a spokesman for South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds.

By the time the Pentagon recommended closing 33 major bases and realigning 29 others on May 13, Midwest state and local leaders had begun work on meeting what in some cases will be a major challenge. The Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission began holding hearings to refine the list and make its final recommendations in September. If President Bush signs on, Congress would have 45 days to veto the plan with a majority vote from both houses, or allow it to pass.

That's a timeline that will be key for many communities as they look for options, said Patrick O'Brien, director of the Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment. The fight must come first, he said, but the track toward redevelopment must be taken in order to prepare communities that will be looking for financing options in the future once a base is closed or realigned.

"There is some time here for them to do their homework, to get familiar with what the process is," O'Brien said of local communities. Once the fight is done, however, "a clock starts ticking."

If adopted, the current 2005 BRAC recommendations would eliminate 26,187 military and civilian jobs, a figure which includes 13,503 at overseas bases, with as many as 189,565 servicemen and women moving from one base to another. Public finance officials have warned that the cuts stand to have a broad impact, hurting the economies of some communities.

One of those communities surrounds the Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota. The base is slated for closing, which would eliminate the state's second largest employer, excluding state government and higher education. The economic impact would reach about \$ 278 million a year, Rounds' spokesman Johnston said. That's about 1% to 2% of the state's gross state product of about \$ 26 billion a year, he said.

"When you pull that out, it's pretty substantive," he said.

The first front in the state's fight is in Congress. First-term Sen. John Thune has co-sponsored several bills to be introduced as amendments to the defense authorization bill in the next few weeks, said Alex Conant, a spokesman for the senator.

The first bill would postpone the BRAC round until the Pentagon has finished its defense review, set to be completed by the end of 2006, and until the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan end, Conant said.

"Before we start shutting down domestic bases, we should finish that review so we have a better understanding of what our future domestic defense needs are going to be," Conant said.

The second bill would require the Pentagon to turn over data that explains its reasoning for the base **realignments**. Some states have complained that the lack of information has hindered their efforts in the fight to keep their bases open. The third bill would extend whistleblower protection to enlisted men and women who could be called to testify before the BRAC commission, Conant said.

The second line of defense against the cuts comes in the form of a task force made up of leaders from every sector of government. The BRAC panel will hear from many of an anticipated crowd of 6,500 people expected to attend a June 21 hearing on the base closing in the Rapid City Civic Center, Johnston said.

The Ellsworth community is banking on history, which shows that typically about 15% of the bases recommended for closure are taken off the list, Johnston said.

"We're certainly positive that Ellsworth could be one of those bases," he added.

Finally, a dual track toward economic redevelopment is in place, he said.

That fighting attitude varies from other states. While some estimate that **Grand Forks, N.D.**, could lose as many as 5,000 jobs if the proposed **realignment of the Grand Forks Air Force Base** is approved, congressional leaders are looking at the bright side.

"We've got really, really good news," said a spokesman for Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D.

An open base has more potential than one that's closed, he said, adding that the state could see the "wave of the future in military" equipment and development at **Grand Forks**. This base stands to gain from the development of unmanned aircraft, though it will lose some air tankers, the spokesman said. North Dakota's public hearing will be held June 23.

The public hearing in St. Louis, which had been set for yesterday, was postponed until June 20 after Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., and others complained about a lack of data from the Pentagon.

In Illinois and Missouri, which combined could lose 6,400 jobs, officials will base their argument against closing two bases on their role in homeland security. Illinois joined with local communities to spend \$ 3 million to lobby for certain bases, including Scott Air Force Base, which would gain nearly 800 jobs with the plan.

Wisconsin's potential loss of jobs if the 440th Airlift Wing -- based at General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee -- is realigned brought criticism from Gov. Jim Doyle. The economic impact is about \$ 90 million.

"The timing of this couldn't be worse. Right now, 357 personnel from the 440th are serving on active duty, including almost 200 in the Iraq theater," Doyle said in a statement. "It is especially disturbing for the airmen of this unit to get this news at a time when many of them are deployed overseas and flying missions in harm's way."

Though Ohio would see a net gain of 241 jobs, Cleveland would lose the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and about 1,028 jobs. Meanwhile, neighboring Indiana would benefit with a gain of 3,378 civilian jobs and 114 military jobs, including the DFAS to be located in Indianapolis.

As with many states, Ohio had been anticipating changes for some time. The state formed the Ohio Task Force to Save Defense Jobs several years ago, said Mark Rickel, press secretary for Gov. Bob Taft. The General Assembly, which put \$ 2.5 million aside to help communities, "put their best foot forward in encouraging the Department of Defense to reconsider their recommendation," he said. Cleveland has spent about \$ 300,000 to make its case, Rickel said.

In its current budget bill, the state included language to allow Cleveland to partner with the local business community to create incentives for redevelopment, he said. One option is to create a new building for the DFAS site, which could save the Pentagon the cost of moving.

The legislature amended the budget bill to include an additional \$ 1 million for the communities that will need to look to economic redevelopment, he said. The Mansfield Air National Guard Base would lose 295 jobs and the Springfield-Buckley Municipal Airport Air Guard Station would lose 291 jobs.

"First things first. The state's committeeman is going to make the argument on behalf of the communities," Rickel said.

The state boasts one of the success stories featured this past weekend in a national conference that brought together military communities to learn about tools for redevelopment. The Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority was created in 1993 when the BRAC recommended closing the Newark Air Force Base.

Though the community was skeptical of the potential for owning what could be a "white elephant," the Port Authority's moves to privatize the functions of the base have been a success, said executive director Rick Platt.

The authority manages the base and leases the facilities to private military contractors. In 2006, the port will own the land where the base was located, Platt said. In addition, the port has acquired additional land with an eye toward development. The authority has issued about \$ 18 million of bank-qualified bonds as a conduit issuer and for expansion of infrastructure.

Set for closure in 1995, the Newark base was the first to use the privatization model, according to Platt. At a conference for installation developers held in Denver, the authority received an award for innovation and was cited as a model for other communities, he said.

Platt said the community took a risk that has paid off so far. However, the prospect of the military jobs drying up still exists.

"That white elephant looms," Platt said. "We've only tamed the white elephant. It could come back some day."

A more complete transformation occurred in the Chicago suburb of Glenview. The Navy handed over much of the Glenview Naval Air Station in 1995. The suburb north of the city sold \$ 123 million of general obligation debt to lay the groundwork for a \$ 500 million redevelopment. The city estimates that the development created more than 3,000 jobs and helped drive up sales volume in Glenview to more than \$ 450 million, triple the amount when the base was open.

There are many tools that will help communities to ward off that prospect, the Defense Department's O'Brien said. And though there's time, communities must plan so that key elements, such as financing, will be in place when the impact is felt from the changes.

"This is not a sprint," he said. "You have to pace yourself."

BASE CLOSURE: Mission in writing

Grand Forks Herald

Elisa L. Rineheart

June 8, 2005

Air Force brass Tuesday sent a letter to Anthony Principi, head of the Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission, explaining in detail **Grand Forks** Air Force Base's role in emerging drone missions.

The letter, signed by Gen. John Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, and Michael Dominguez, acting secretary of the Air Force, came five days after the Pentagon officially designated **Grand Forks** and Fargo's Air National Guard as the second unmanned aerial vehicle unit in the country.

Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., said the state's congressional delegation asked the Air Force to submit its intentions in writing to the commission, so commission members would have a point of reference to use in their analysis and recommendations for Fargo and **Grand Forks**.

"There can't be any confusion on the BRAC Commission as to why they (the Pentagon) kept **Grand Forks** open," said Dorgan, referring to a question raised by Principi to Pentagon officials during the first testimony after the BRAC list was released.

The three-page document talks about the role of **Grand Forks**, Fargo and Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and their importance as future training facilities and their contribution to Air Force Future Total Force missions and initiatives.

Besides providing a "strategic presence in the north central United States," **Grand Forks** is an excellent training area for possible missions in places with harsh winter weather conditions such as the Korean peninsula, the letter said.

When the first 12 Predators were assigned to **Grand Forks**, local pilots said they were curious as to how the unmanned aircraft would perform when snow storms limit visibility, especially because those same winter weather conditions sometimes make experienced tanker pilots pray for dear life as they approach the base's landing strip.

The letter answers that question.

"Establishing a cold weather UAV center is necessary to advance training and system developments to ensure these vehicles can be operated worldwide," the document said.

Senators Kent Conrad, D-N.D., and Dorgan said Tuesday that the letter reaffirms Friday's announcement by Lt. Gen. Stephen Wood, deputy chief of staff for plans and programs.

Conrad said this is the first time the Air Force formally has addressed the "trained to fight" concept and acknowledges **Grand Forks** potential as a UAV center of excellence.

"It provides a snapshot of the air traffic in North Dakota showing how open our airspace is and how important it is for remotely piloted missions," Conrad said.

Gov. John Hoeven and Maj. Gen. Michael Haugen, the North Dakota National Guard Commander, will meet with Pentagon officials Thursday to talk about future flying missions for Fargo and other BRAC-related issues such as retaining a possible role in the tanker mission in **Grand Forks**, Conrad said.

Hoeven says Washington visit isn't political

Associated Press State and Local Wire

Mary Clare Jalonick

June 7, 2005

North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven is slated to meet with White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove, President Bush's chief political strategist in Washington this week. But he says it has nothing to do with a potential run against Democratic Sen. Kent Conrad.

Conrad is up for re-election in 2006, and Hoeven has been touted by state and national political officials as his strongest potential Republican opponent. But the governor has been quiet on his plans, deferring questions on a run without denying he is considering it.

"I'm focused on this job and I'm not going to speculate at this point," Hoeven said Tuesday.

The White House pushed several high-profile Republicans to run in the 2004 election cycle, including Republican John Thune of South Dakota. Thune ousted Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle last November.

Hoeven said he has several meetings planned for Wednesday and Thursday, including the meeting with Rove. He said he plans to talk with Rove about "natural resource issues," including flooding in Devil's Lake.

The governor said the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the party's campaign arm, had wanted to meet with him but he did not have enough time for them.

"It's not going to work out," he said of the meeting.

Hoeven said he will be meeting with senior Pentagon officials to discuss the **realignment of Grand Forks** Air Force Base and Fargo's Air National Guard Base.

He will also talk to the Pentagon office in charge of economic readjustment for communities affected by base closings and **realignments**.

Hoeven said he does not believe the White House will pressure him to run.

"He understands people make their own decisions," he said of President Bush.

Air Force plans 'family' of UAVs in North Dakota

Aerospace Daily & Defense Report

Marc Selinger

June 6, 2005

The U.S. Air Force announced plans June 3 to create a "family" of Global Hawk and Predator unmanned aerial vehicles in North Dakota, saying the state has many ideal conditions for UAV training.

Air Force officials also revealed that Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) intends to stand up its first Predator squadron, which will be based in Nevada.

Lt. Gen. Stephen Wood, Air Force deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, said North Dakota is well-suited for training UAV operators because it has "vast amounts of airspace," low population density, minimal civilian air traffic and a wide range of weather conditions.

North Dakota is also considered attractive because two bases in the state are expected to free up room for new tenants. Air National Guard F-16s at Hector Field in Fargo are slated for retirement, and the Defense Department has proposed moving KC-135 tankers from **Grand Forks Air Force Base** to other locations.

If those F-16 and KC-135 plans are upheld by the Base **Realignment** and Closure commission and by Congress, the Air Force will place General Atomics Aeronautical Systems-built Predators and Northrop Grumman-made Global Hawks at **Grand Forks** and UAV ground control systems at Hector Field, Wood said at a press briefing. North Dakota's Predator squadron would have about 12 air vehicles. The Air Force still is determining how many Global Hawks would be placed at **Grand Forks**.

The Air Force wants to have a total of up to 15 Predator squadrons, including the planned AFSOC and North Dakota units, three existing Predator squadrons at Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field, Nev., and three units slated for Arizona, New York and Texas. Locations for up to seven other Predator squadrons have not been announced.

Beale Air Force Base, Calif., currently is the sole base for Global Hawks in the continental United States, but the Air Force plans to buy more than 50 Global Hawks, which is more than Beale could accommodate, Wood said.

Wood said it is "way too early" to consider basing issues for the X-45C and X-47B Joint Unmanned Combat Air Systems (J-UCAS), which are in the early stages of development by the Air Force, Navy and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Grand Forks looking for money to deal with base change impacts

Associated Press State and Local Wire

June 3, 2005

Area officials are seeking \$175,000 in federal money to set up a redevelopment authority to deal

with impacts from changes at **Grand Forks Air Force Base**.

The base stands to lose its KC-135 air refueling tankers and two-thirds of its personnel under Pentagon base-closure and **realignment** plans. The Air Force said Friday that it is planning to station a squadron of Predator unmanned flying drones at the base, that will be flown by Air National Guard pilots in Fargo and supported by personnel at the **Grand Forks** base.

A squadron includes up to 600 people, not including support personnel at the air base. The base currently has more than 2,800 active-duty military personnel.

Local officials say the loss of a large number of people from the base would hurt communities, businesses and school districts, the **Grand Forks** airport, and area colleges and universities.

City, county and state officials met on Thursday to discuss efforts to obtain federal grants. Some team members will be traveling to Denver this weekend to attend seminars on available federal programs and how to apply for them.

Ron Rauschenberger, Gov. John Hoeven's deputy chief of staff, said the top priority is still to retain the base and its tanker mission, but planning in case the retention fight fails also is important.

The grant with the earliest deadline is a Department of Labor emergency grant of up to \$1 million for communities hurt by the Base **Realignment** and Closure process.

To win the grants that are available, state and local officials will have to work together because applications typically require information that only one or the other entity has, said Maren Daley, Job Service North Dakota executive director.

Coordination also is critical because the amount received for some grants affects how much can be received through other grants, Daley said.

GFAFB: BRAC in the back yard

Grand Forks Herald

Mike Brue

May 20, 2005

Grand Forks is one of only 16 communities nationwide chosen as sites for upcoming regional hearings on the fate of the nation's military bases -- a best-case scenario, say **Grand Forks** Air Force Base proponents eager to state their case.

"It's always better when you can put a face to a problem," East **Grand Forks** Mayor Lynn Stauss said. "When you can put a face to it, you have a much better chance of getting a positive result."

One of many faces expected to be seen June 23 at the **Grand Forks** Base **Realignment** and Closure hearing is JoAnn Renfrow.

"It's a good opportunity for us to have them come, and have that hearing, and let them see that

base for themselves," said Renfrow, whose business has provided grounds maintenance and landscaping at the base for years.

She attended previous **Grand Forks** BRAC hearings in 1993 and 1995. "They see what a great place it is," she said, "and see how the community rallies and supports that base."

"They" are members of the federal BRAC Commission. The nine-member group is reviewing military facility needs as they pertain to national defense strategies for the next 20 years.

The **Grand Forks** base is one of 29 recommended for **realignment**, but the potential regional economic impact exceeds that for many of the 33 other communities nationwide facing base closures, military documents indicate.

The Pentagon recommends removal of the air refueling tanker fleet while keeping the base open for potential new missions. Military estimates outline a worst-case, direct and indirect loss of nearly 5,000 jobs in **Grand Forks** and Polk counties over six years.

Grand Forks' June 23 hearing -- starting at 8:30 a.m. in a venue to be determined -- is the seventh of 16 announced Thursday, starting in Salt Lake City and St. Louis on June 7 and concluding in Los Angeles on July 14. The nearest besides **Grand Forks** is a June 21 hearing in Rapid City, S.D., home of closure target Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Members of the BRAC Commission -- only some will attend each hearing -- also intend to visit local bases at hearing sites.

For six U.S. senators and congressmen from North Dakota and Minnesota, the **Grand Forks** hearing is a case of "ask, and you shall receive." North Dakota Sens. Kent Conrad and Byron Dorgan and Rep. Earl Pomeroy, and Minnesota Sens. Norm Coleman and Mark Dayton and Seventh District Rep. Collin Peterson asked for a **Grand Forks** hearing in a joint letter Tuesday to commission chair Anthony Principi.

"The entire northwest (Minnesota) region needs both states to work together on this matter," said Stauss, who visited with senators and representatives in Washington several weeks ago.

Stauss said he warned "it would be too much if we were to lose CAFTA" -- a free-trade agreement that many sugar beet supporters say threatens the industry's long-term stability -- "and if we were to lose the air base. I said we're still not totally recovered from the flood."

The BRAC Commission will forward its own recommendations to President Bush by early September. If Bush approves the commission's list, Congress can accept it or vote to reject it.

The **Grand Forks** hearing is an opportunity to highlight community support, more than \$ 200 million in recent base infrastructure projects and the base's capacity for more missions as other bases are closed and realigned, Dorgan said by phone from Washington. He said the commission "has made some early sounds that they want to be assertive in their own right A personal visit is really important. There's no substitute for seeing a base up close."

Coleman, speaking by phone from Washington, said **Grand Forks** base backers now need to work to ensure "this recommendation for the facility doesn't come to pass the way it was proposed."

The Air Force supports giving **Grand Forks** Air Force Base a new role in homeland security and a fledgling mission involving unmanned aircraft, also called drones. But base supporters hope to bring clarity to Air Force plans while convincing BRAC commissioners to retain an air refueling tanker mission at **Grand Forks**.

"I'm glad we're getting to showcase the community," **Grand Forks** Mayor Mike Brown said. "I think we'll roll out the red carpet, as we have in the past."

Editorial Articles

Say yes to BRAC

Grand Forks Herald

June 13, 2005

The financial condition of the country is as important as the military strategy. We cannot afford to keep bases open just for the jobs, opportunity or growth.

I agree with the Pentagon's base closing and **realignment** decisions. Off-color: Does anyone at the Herald check the colors in the pictures of people in the news?

The May 27 Herald had many pictures of people and just about every one was distorted. I'm wondering why a newspaper with the experience and skill that the Herald has cannot print people's pictures without their eyes being in their forehead, women having mustaches and so on.

Many small town papers have no problem with this. Follow the money: With all the talk about an increase in property taxes in **Grand Forks** and the possibility of mill-levy decreases to balance things out a bit, I would be curious to know what the different entities are doing with the mill-levy money they are getting.

For example, a few years ago, voters in **Grand Forks** County elected to increase the mills for emergency medical service. What are places such as Altru doing with that extra money? Are they spending it on additional equipment for emergency responses or training? Open the books: I want to know what the current budgets are for these taxing entities and what next year's budgets are.

What are the increases and what would the increase be with and without the mill-rate cuts? Could they have substantial increases in their budgets even though they make minimal cuts?

The **Grand Forks** School Board and leadership are very secretive about things and not responsive to citizen inquiries, in my view. Gateway welcome: When the BRAC committee comes to **Grand Forks** later this month, they are sure to travel down Gateway Drive. It's hard to tell what the effect of that will be. Maybe they'll have more pity on us; maybe they'll think we don't value the base as much as we say, based on the repulsive Gateway area.

Or maybe they can be distracted by people holding signs: "Pay no attention to the junked cars, this is a great place to live and work."

OUR OPINION: Together at last: GF, Fargo

Tom Dennis

Grand Forks Herald

June 6, 2005

Our view:: The base **realignment** will force the two cities to work more closely together than ever before. Good.

An era is ending in the Red River Valley, events of the last week made clear. And with any luck, a new and better era in the valley's history is about to begin.

The century-old era that's ending had the region's two metro areas, **Grand Forks-East Grand Forks** and Fargo-Moorhead, competing against each other as rivals. Each pair of cities went its separate way and gave little thought to cooperating with the other.

This bred a mild resentment between the cities like the kind between squabbling siblings. You know the feeling: the half-friendly and half-envious glances that residents cast at each other up or down Interstate 29; the rivalry that at times felt as intense as (and, indeed, was related to) a UND-North Dakota State University matchup on the gridiron.

But with NDSU moving its sports teams to NCAA Division I, the athletic rivalry has faded.

The civic rivalry now could do the same, in the wake of the news that **Grand Forks Air Force Base's** proposed **realignment** toward UAVs or unmanned aerial vehicles will draw on Fargo's resources and personnel as heavily as it will **Grand Forks'**.

Basically, if the base's **realignment** unfolds as planned, the two metro areas will be joined at the hip, at least as far as the military presence in the valley is concerned. "Tentative plans call for a Predator launch-and-recovery team of about 200 people to operate from **Grand Forks**," Herald staff writer Elisa L. Rineheart reported in Saturday's Herald.

"The Predator's pilots would be based in Fargo, with its other squadron personnel divided among the North Dakota Air National Guard base in Fargo and **Grand Forks Air Force Base**."

The assignments likely would stay divided if the the mission grows, as officials hope it will.

This means joint North/South military-affairs committees will be needed before long, to handle such matters as base/community relations, commuting options for base personnel and Air Force- and aerospace-related economic development.

Most important of all, **Grand Forks** and Fargo will be wanting to form a joint base-retention committee, to protect the newly realigned units against the next base-closure round.

And once officials and leaders from both cities work together on base-related committees, can non-base-related joint efforts and cooperation be far behind?

Grand Forks and Fargo both are used to working with their respective nearby towns. Now, the base **realignments** will force the valley's biggest cities to work closely with unexpected partners: each other.

Humphrey Bogart said it best, in an airport scene of his own as he and Claude Rains walked off by a runway in "Casablanca": "Louis, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship."