



BRAC Commission

JUL 22 2005

Received

18 July 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

In response to your letter dated July 8, 2005 I have provided answers to the questions posed. This was done in consultation with the Adjutants General of the various states. I have incorporated their comments and information in the answers provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to clarify issues about the BRAC recommendations as they apply to the Air National Guard.

You and your fellow commissioners are to be commended for so persistently seeking information and answers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger P. Lempke".

ROGER P. LEMPKE
Major General
President, AGAUS

Enclosure

AGAUS to BRAC Commission Questions in a letter dated July 8, 2005

#1 – Some believe that DoD underestimated the attrition which will occur in the Guard if the recommendations are approved. What is your estimate of the rate of attrition for the operations, maintenance, and support career fields? Please assess each career area individually.

After the BRAC recommendations were released on 13 May some units conducted informal surveys to assess the impact their personnel. Typically, the surveys focused on operations and maintenance career fields since the enclave concept which for retaining some number of support personnel was undefined. Across the board commanders predict 75 to 85 percent losses beginning almost immediately as some members vie for positions at other locations. The most significant impact will be on senior leadership since gaining units seldom have vacancies in senior officer and NCO positions. At look at some specific re-location and mission changes in the past can be helpful.

The experience of the 126th ARW in BRAC 95 is pertinent. The wing moved from O'Hare IAP to Scott AFB in 1999. Hard data shows that the retention rate for the Scott portion of the move (854 people, 300 miles) was 43%. For the Springfield portion (119 people, 198 miles) the retention rate was 72%. And for the Peoria portion (165 people, 172 miles) the retention rate was 68%. Recruiters were stationed at Scott one year prior to the move.

Full time manning suffered an overall loss of 30% at the time of the move. Considerable turnover (i.e. resignation and hiring) occurred in the 12 months prior to the actual move. It took 5 years for manning to again reach 100%. The rate of attrition in the 126th did not vary appreciably between operations, maintenance, and support.

SIGNIFICANTLY, only 63 commuters from Chicago remain of those who were members of the 126th ARW prior to the move. IN ALL, in six years the 126th ARW has had a turnover rate of 92%.

A survey in Ohio revealed the following.

- 85 to 90 percent of the Operations Group will leave with some starting immediately.
- Eighty-five percent from Maintenance indicated they will leave.

Western states such as Texas and Montana express very strong ties to their communities which will prevent them from moving even if jobs exist elsewhere.

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#2 - In any conversion, there is a period of time in which combat capability is lost. Combat capability is also likely to suffer as a result of DoD's plans to accelerate the retirement of certain weapons systems. What does the prospect of losing higher than anticipated levels of personnel, coupled with the accelerated drawdown of material, mean for the Guard's mission capabilities? In the event of an aircraft conversion, how long should it take for a unit to achieve a high combat rating?

The Air National Guard has a long history of aircraft conversions. These have typically been conducted in sequential fashion over some extended period to avoid overwhelming training and support resources. At a single location a two to three year timeframe for successful conversion is common—even with disparate airframes such as converting from fighters to tankers. But when conversion is combined with movement problems multiply and achieving combat readiness can be significantly delayed.

The move of the 126th from O'Hare IAP to Scott AFB is instructive. In FY 2000, a year after the move started, nearly 50% of the wing was in training. Combat readiness in some UTC's still has not reached maximum readiness due to the personnel training requirement. Currently, 17 crewmembers from the 126th Operations Group commute from the Chicago area. This causes difficulty especially with last minute changes to flying and deployment schedules. Combining moves with conversion is a potentially devastating combination.

The 116th relocated from Dobbins AFB to Robins AFB and converted from F-15s to B-1s in the late 1990's—a move of about 115 miles. Over 90 percent of the pilots either did not want to move or could not take time off to attend the mandatory transition school. Consequently, nearly a complete turnover occurred in Operations. Fulltime maintenance required for the B-1 mission doubled. The hiring process for this increase took nearly three years.

Air Force training resources cannot absorb large numbers of requirements that result from densely packed conversions. A look at the A-10 weapon system highlights this problem. Six bases are slated to add aircraft per BRAC recommendations. A reasonable estimate is for 57 transition courses being needed to compliment direct hire and UPT fills for these units. The transition course at Barksdale AFB accomplishes 24 courses per year. These are already full keeping up with new hires to balance retirements and other losses. The moves proposed by BRAC recommendations for the A-10 aircraft alone will necessitate doubling Air Force transition course availability for a two to five year period.

The combination of numerous conversions under a tight time schedule along with limited Air Force transition courses in all weapon systems will keep many converted units in a low readiness status for extended periods. If a "normal" conversion takes two years it is not unreasonable to expect units after BRAC to require five or more years to reach a high readiness status.

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3 -- Regarding Optimum Primary Aircraft Authorized (PAA): The Air Force has spoken about "right-sizing" fighter, transport, and tanker units. The Commission is aware that the Guard operates at higher mission capability rates on smaller, more efficient bases than the Active Duty force. Do the Adjutants General believe there should be a "right size" for Active Duty units and a separate one for components of the Guard?

To support the Air Force's Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) management construct the Air National Guard fields packages from different units to meet deployment requirements. This often called the "rainbow" concept. Different weapon systems have different packages—airlift and tankers often use four and six aircraft packages. The Air Force usually requires active duty wings to provide squadron size packages to support the AEF while calling on the Air National Guard to provide the same capability in smaller packages from different states that are "rainbowed."

This concept works very well for the Air National Guard for many reasons. The ANG does not have to rely on a standard squadron size to meet AEF needs because of the inherent flexibility in the package concept. Additionally, the force package concept allows a number of units to be tapped for supporting AEF rotations such that no one unit is unduly tasked. This is important to Governors because they can be assured ANG resources will always be available to support homeland security needs.

Air Guard site resources vary. Some sites are capable of handling more aircraft than others. If a standard PAA had become a requirement years ago significant MILCON funding would have necessary to bring all sites up a standard size. Allowing variations prevents this need for MILCON. In supporting all requirements of the AEF the Air National Guard has demonstrated varying squadron sizes are not a factor to meeting mission needs.

The air dominance mission accomplished by fighters does point to a need for a higher PAA in units with this mission. The attached letter from Maj Gen Mase Whitney explains this special need.

In summary, The Adjutants General understand the Air Force's desire to standardize active component squadron size since this is the basic deployment size used by the active component. This is not the case for the Air National Guard. Using force packages and the "rainbow" concept the Air National Guard provides the right number of aircraft for AEF needs without requiring the same size of unit in every state.

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#4 -- If the Commission failed to ask any relevant questions pertaining to MCI ratings at the Department of Homeland Security-Adjutants General public hearing, please provide us with a list of such questions as well as the answers you would have given.

Military Capability Index MCI:

We can find only 2 of 1800 BRAC Data Call questions related to Homeland Defense/Security - neither of which were calculated in the USAF Mission Compatibility Index rating.

The follow questions should have been asked and rated:

- 1) Is your unit tasked for Homeland Defense/Security Missions? If yes:
 - 1a) how close is your unit to your Homeland Defense/Security AOR?
 - 1b) how close are population centers, vital transportation hubs, nuclear facilities, etc.
 - 1c) was your unit tasked to perform 24/7 Combat Air Patrols on Sept 11th

Why did homeland defense units (that store their current Air-to-Air munitions) receive no credit for this capability in the BRAC Military Value Analysis?

Airspace measurement:

- Why was training airspace the most important measurement for fighter MCI? Why was credit not given for unlimited access to virtually unlimited airspace for training?
 - Why was a random number of 50 miles used to determine the MCI value of training airspace? Did you evaluate the availability of airspace based on the number of users?
 - Why was air-to-ground airspace evaluated for homeland defense air-to-air fighter units?
- Was airspace congestion considered? Bases with large numbers of airspace customers frequently lose training due to airspace congestion. Was the customer base considered?
- In the case of homeland defense, the airspace measurement is considerable less important than proximity to key infrastructure and population centers (centers of gravity).

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#5 -- In your opinion, what types of new or emerging missions are appropriate for the Guard?

The best new or emerging missions are:

- Flying missions in the next generation of aircraft (F/A-22; F-35; C-17; new tanker and its variants; Future Cargo Aircraft (FCA); V-22; etc.)
- Information Operations
- Space
- UAV
- Associate units, especially community basing in fighters, airlift and tankers.

Over the last twenty years the Air National Guard has operated in the same flying mission areas with the same equipment as the active component providing the nation with unparalleled savings. As the Air Force transforms to new systems and mission areas so should the Air National Guard.

The issue with new and emerging missions is timing and viability. BRAC recommendations enacted into law must be accomplished within the timeframe prescribed. Many new and emerging missions are in preliminary definition phases. Most are not funded, do not have concept of operation documents, lack manning documents, and lack implementation plans. The nation is losing thousands of experienced Air National Guard service members simply because BRAC takes away the flexibility needed to bridge the gap between the present legacy force and new missions.

Uncertainty exists in some new mission areas because of how some choose to interpret Title 10 and Title 32 statutes. This places some highly lucrative missions for the Air National Guard at risk of being not viable. It does not currently appear that new legislature will resolve these interpretation issues before the BRAC Commission completes its work.

Air Force leaders and the Adjutants General are in agreement that the Air National Guard should play a significant role in new and emerging missions. However, the timing of the current BRAC recommendations places a significant gap between eliminating infrastructure and operations and standing up new missions.

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#6 -- Do you support more City Basing? Do you support more Associate Units and Blended Wings?

We support active associate units wherever it makes sense. Community Basing is a dynamic subset of an active associate and is most appropriate where a Guard base and an active duty base are not co-located. The efficiencies gained by combining active duty and Guard has been proven by Air Mobility Command. The test case for Community Basing in Burlington Vermont will expand this relationship in the fighter community. This construct should be used where there are not active bases close enough to provide support facilities. Active associate units build on the strengths of each component while allowing the Guard to maintain strength and positions necessary for response to Homeland Security and Homeland Defense missions and other state and territorial needs.

The Air National Guard brings to the Air Force a community presence. The Air Force risks becoming a service invisible to the public as it consolidates. ANG sites generally need to be located where the population can support wing size organizations. This is not a requirement for Air Force bases since the Air Force recruits nationwide. Being spread out in populated areas helps the Air Force recruit and sustain community connections. Therefore simply moving ANG units to the nearest Air Force base may often result in losing the community presence and recruiting opportunities near current ANG facilities. Determining the right situations for active associate relationships needs to be accomplished in a collaborative effort involving the Air Force, NGB, and the states.

Blended wings have proven to be more problematical. Outstanding unit leadership has made the largest experiment to date with the 116th in Georgia a success. But most agree that this model has many deficiencies to overcome if attempted again.

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#7 -- Have the Adjutants General assessed the impact Guard-unit consolidations will have on the Guard's ability to operate under State Active Duty or Title 32 status? More specifically, how will the Air Force's recommendations affect a governor's ability to deploy C-130s in response to a catastrophic event?

The most significant impact will be on the loss of service members and unique capabilities to respond to emergencies. Houston is a good example. The TAG will have a reduced capability by some 556 positions in the Houston area. This area is situated along the Gulf coast and is subject to natural disasters like hurricanes, tornados, and flooding. Loss of these personnel will degrade military support to civil authorities in the event of a disaster. Specialized support like C2 via the command post will remain with the Alert Mission but Intel, weather, and most of the heavy equipment qualified workforce (which resides in Aircraft Maintenance) will be reassigned or deleted. C-130 support to Houston would not be feasible using military personnel left at Ellington but could be easily supported at any of the major airports using a commercial Fixed Base Operator.

The proposed deactivation of the 111th Fighter Wing in Pennsylvania will deprive the Governor of 1,000 well-trained, mission-ready personnel at a key strategic location near Philadelphia, New York and the National Capital Region. In addition to pilots and maintainers, the unit has security police (law enforcement), doctors, nurses, lawyers, civil engineers, engineering personnel, administrative, and operational personnel. Placing a large number of C-130's at one base with a single runway located in tornado alley makes little sense. The newest document from DoD, "Strategy For Homeland Defense and Civil Support," talks about layered defense. Dispersal is a good thing.

If the proposed BRAC recommendations are implemented, the Governor of Delaware would lose half of the Air Guard personnel currently available to her. That would greatly diminish her ability to respond to state emergencies and would force her to rely on other states and the federal government. The federal government has set a standard of initiating a response to requests from governors within 72 hours. The Civil Support Teams, which deploy with their equipment on C-130s, in each state give the Governor the ability to respond within four hours. Losing the C-130s would eliminate the Governor's ability to provide that response in the critical 2-4 hour window. In addition, losing the Air Guard personnel would dramatically reduce the number of trained and ready personnel on hand to organize additional response efforts.

The issue with C-130 availability has to do with proximity. A Governor without C-130's in the state will turn to nearby states and use the EMAC process for support. For regional support to be effective C-130's need to be dispersed rather than consolidated. Governors do not have ready access to active duty or Air Force Reserve aircraft so these cannot be counted on for rapid response until a federal emergency is declared. Even then, the Governor can only request support, not direct it.

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#8 -- Please provide the Commission with a historical record (dating back three years) of all communication that has occurred between the Adjutants General, the National Guard Bureau, and the Air Force regarding the Vanguard strategy.

Vanguard was introduced in the 2002 timeframe. Initially, it was a set of precepts, identified as pillars, to transform the Air National Guard into a twenty-first century force ready, reliable, relevant, and accessible. In 2003 it became more of a plan involving changes to almost every state to meet upcoming aircraft retirements and modernization. This aspect of the plan was developed by NGB but not presented to the states except in a general sense.

A force structure meeting organized and conducted by AGAUS and involving NGB and Air Staff personnel shed some light on the depth of aircraft reductions contemplated by the Air Force. This meeting was held in September of 2003. Significant discussion ensued about how the states could continue to propose alternate ideas for transforming. None of the VANGUARD plans for individual states were divulged.

Sometime in late-2003 NGB began to reveal to each state the plan contemplated by VANGUARD for it. States learned of their aspect of the plan primarily through discussions with NGB senior staff.

In July 2004 a meeting was hosted by NGB in Washington, DC. The purpose of the meeting was to present VANGUARD details to all the Adjutants General. Senior Air Force officials attended portions of the meeting to emphasize the need for Air Force transformation. Less than 20 state plans were actually revealed. The Adjutants General were given the option of having the information on their state revealed or not. Because of community and political sensitivity many choose not to have the plan for their state revealed.

After this meeting the detailed VANGUARD plan seemed to fade away. It never received AGAUS concurrence because it was never presented in its entirety to the Adjutants General. The theme of the 2004 ANG Senior Leadership Conference in December 2004 was "Implementing VANGUARD: meeting the challenges of tomorrow today." However, details were not discussed in this forum.

It is important to note that NGB officials were always careful to detach VANGUARD from BRAC.

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#9 -- Please provide the Commission with a historical record of all communication that has occurred between the National Guard Bureau and the several States regarding the Department of Defense base realignment and closure process.

A short-suspense question to all Adjutants General uncovered no correspondence that sought consultation about BRAC prior to beginning of the WIDGET data call process. The AGAUS meet with NGB officials numerous times throughout a year; sometimes these meetings also involve Air Staff personnel. Examples of pertinent major meetings that would have provided forums for substantive discussions about BRAC include:

- AGAUS Force Structure Meeting at Andrews AFB, September 2003
- ANG Senior Leadership Conference (SLC) in Baltimore, MD, December 2003
- AGAUS Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC, February 2004
- AGAUS Spring Conference in Columbus, OH, June 2004
- VANGUARD Briefing hosted by NGB in Washington, DC, July 2004
- ANG Senior Leadership Conference (SLC) in Phoenix, AZ, December 2004
- AGAUS Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC, February 2004
- Special Adjutant General Fly-in to review FTF in Washington, DC, April 2004

During this series of meetings the intent and details of VANGUARD and the Air Force Future Total Force (FTF) plans were gradually revealed. Substantive discussions about BRAC never occurred.

The AGAUS fully appreciates that as some point BRAC teams of each service entered a period of deliberations that by necessity were closed. However, the AGAUS could have made a significant contribution in preparing and reviewing military value considerations and grading criteria to ensure Air National Guard sites were properly assessed.