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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2002

August 5, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 S. Clark St.
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to express our support for the Department of Defense (DOD) recommendation to consolidate the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) headquarters at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). APG is home to the roots of today's Army test and evaluation mission. In fact, Army testing began at APG in 1917. Therefore, we believe it is natural match for ATEC to move to APG and join many of its subordinate commands already located at the Proving Ground.

One of the principle goals articulated by the DOD in its BRAC recommendations was streamlining headquarters operations. By moving the ATEC headquarters to APG, the Army will consolidate its principal test and evaluation headquarters organizations – ATEC and the Developmental Test Command – at one installation and in proximity to the National Capital Region. The Army Evaluation Center, which is now split primarily between APG and leased space in Alexandria, VA, will also be consolidated at one site. In addition, these organizations will enjoy a synergistic relationship with the Aberdeen Test Center. This consolidation will improve mission effectiveness, create efficiencies by eliminating redundant positions, and still enable responsive support to senior Pentagon officials.

An added benefit to the operational rationale for this recommendation is that ATEC headquarters would be moved out of its current leased space. By moving to government owned facilities at APG, ATEC would now have adequate force protection for the workforce and avoid almost \$3 million per year in lease costs.

As with other recommendations to re-locate technical assets, concerns have been raised about the potential for loss of expertise as a result of this move. We do not believe these concerns have merit. Although we believe a large portion of the ATEC workforce will move or commute to APG, there are already many scientists and engineers with expertise in testing and evaluation working at APG in the Developmental Test Command, the Aberdeen Test Center, the Army Evaluation Center, and the Army Materiel Systems Analysis Activity. In addition, a large portion of the technical staff at ATEC today is

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active-duty military and therefore can be easily reassigned. In fact, the operational expertise in ATEC's products can be attributed to the operational experiences these military personnel bring with them. Finally, as recognized by the DOD in their BRAC recommendations, the APG-area has one of the most technologically proficient workforces in the entire country.

We understand that the Commission has also inquired about the feasibility of moving ATEC to Fort Belvoir based on the rationale that ATEC must remain in close proximity to the Pentagon. We believe that ATEC staff will be able to provide responsive support to senior Pentagon officials from APG. Given the congestion in the Fort Belvoir area, the commute from Fort Belvoir to the Pentagon is not much shorter than the travel time from APG to the Pentagon. Furthermore, we do not believe that Fort Belvoir is an appropriate site for the military mission of ATEC. Fort Belvoir does not have any organizations similar to ATEC or related to its activities. Co-location with other test and evaluation tenants is the most important military value benefit of moving ATEC to APG.

There are several other reasons we believe APG is the best location for ATEC. First, under the 2005 BRAC recommendations, Fort Belvoir is projected to receive approximately 18,000 new workers and concerns have been raised about the adequacy of the surrounding community's infrastructure to accommodate this influx. In addition, space has already been designated to absorb ATEC at APG without requiring new military construction. In contrast, we understand that a new headquarters building would need to be constructed at Fort Belvoir which would cost at least \$37 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue. We hope you will carefully consider these factors as the Commission continues to examine the DOD recommendations.

With best regards,



Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress