

TESTIMONY, MAJOR GENERAL VAVALA
Base Realignment and Closure Commission Hearing
United States Senate, Hart Building
11 AUGUST 2005

INTRODUCTION:

I am Major General Frank Vavala, Adjutant General for Delaware, and vice president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss some of the concerns the Adjutants General continue to have with the BRAC recommendations for the Air National Guard and for your service on this Commission.

As we come to the end of this process, a great deal of thoughtful analysis by all of the parties impacted by various recommendations is now available. As with any large undertaking, this is both helpful in perfecting the end result and difficult because there is so much information to weigh. From the perspective of the Adjutants General, we hope that you will keep in mind five of our key concerns, including the squadron sizing recommendations, the creation of enclave bases, the homeland security impacts, the need for more discussion of emerging missions, and the lack of real cost savings.

First, the issue of changing squadron sizes throughout the Air Force.

We are concerned that there was no serious quantitative look at the costs and benefits of moving to larger squadrons. Volume 5 of the Air Force BRAC recommendations gives optimal and acceptable squadron sizes for all aircraft. However, no justification is provided. In later testimony the Air Force has indicated that they determined that the greater experience of Air Guard squadrons would allow for optimal operations with the lower, "acceptable" number of airplanes. This belated recognition of the benefits of greater Air Guard experience begs the question of why even smaller squadrons might not work as well for the Air Guard. In addition the Air Force has also indicated verbally that there are some cost savings associated with more planes per squadron, but they have not been able to specify how those savings might be different for Guard units that are already much more cheaply operated than Active Duty units.

In response to a Congressional query about C130 squadrons the Air Force stated that their "best military judgment" was the rationale, but failed to provide any explanation of that judgment or any data to indicate what had been the basis for the judgment. Merely saying that larger units would better support the AEF structure is simply not enough. USAFE (U.S. Air Forces Europe) recently determined that 8 aircraft per squadron is the optimal number for C130s. As you know, the Air Guard has operated C130 squadron with 8 planes with great success. What aspect of the European and Air Guard experiences are unique? We would argue that it is important to assess the Guard and Active Duty experiences separately as they face different operating situations ranging from their basing costs to the experience of their aircrews and maintainers. The Air

Guard fighter and tanker force share this same experience. Critically, we believe it is essential that any major change in the squadron size for various aircraft be analyzed clearly and with data that can be properly evaluated.

The GAO's recent finding that the Air Force did not properly analyze the restructuring of the B-1B fleet (GA-02-846) is an important reminder that the "best military judgment" is not always sufficient for restructuring decisions.

In this instance, the potential for great harm by following these unvalidated recommendations is significant. For the Air Guard, increasing the squadron sizes as laid out in the BRAC recommendations would mean closing 6 units, leaving five states without an Air Guard flying unit, and creating 23 enclave bases. Such dramatic changes should not only be justified with clear data and analysis, but should also be consistent with on-going studies like the QDR, Mobility Requirements Study, and the Tactical Airlift Study that are defining future requirements.

AGAUS believes that programmatic issues like adjusting squadron sizes and moving aircraft should not be included in the Commission's final BRAC recommendations. In terms of legal requirements, the Commission does not appear to be legally bound to retain the recommendations for consolidated Air Guard squadrons as the only detail provided in the force structure submissions given to Congress is that the Air Force will have 10 AEFs. No definitions of optimal squadron sizes were included in those submissions

It is the military judgment of the Adjutant Generals that using the BRAC process to legally establish concepts that have not been properly analyzed and that are not part of reducing excess infrastructure is a dangerous precedent to set.

When you change squadron sizes, you get to a second major concern – the creation of enclave bases.

When I testified on June 30, 2005 in Atlanta, I shared with the Commission our concerns about this construct. Since then we have not received any additional information, nor gotten any explanation that dispels those concerns. The Department of Defense letter of 14 July 2005 to this Commission indicated that there were Air Force deliberations regarding enclaves, but did not address the three critical substantive concerns – first, that there was not an adequate budgeting strategy for enclaves; second, that no consideration was given to the impact on recruitment and retention; and third, that no consultation occurred to determine the actual needs of governors for homeland defense and emergency response. It appears to us that bases would be shrunk to such a degree that they could not accommodate the growth required for a follow-on mission that might be available two to five years down the road. Absent a clear path forward we believe these enclaves are closures that will happen slowly, but without the more stringent review of closures done during the BRAC process. In addition, while the Air Force can routinely move its Active Duty personnel to follow its weapons systems, we see the potential for severe personnel losses in the Guard because of members' traditional ties to their communities. Those ties

are, in fact, the cornerstone of the militia concept. Perhaps most distressing was the decision to ignore one of the five basic principles AGAUS provided the Air Force at the beginning of this process – that there be an Air Guard flying unit in every state. The loss of a state's only flying unit is likely to be the beginning of the end of those Guard units. You have heard it before, but it is so vital to us that I must say it again – taking the “air” out of the Air National Guard takes out its heart and soul. Experienced members are likely to leave and young citizens in those states and territories will look for other venues to serve. Finally, it is not at all clear that the needs of governors can be met by enclave bases. Air National Guard members are integral to individual state plans for response to natural and manmade disasters. Air National Guard personnel are able to support governors in their state status in a variety of state mission areas and are likely to need that dual status to help lead a federal response. The enclave concept as it is currently understood is very troubling to AGAUS and we do not believe its impacts have been properly assessed.

The problems with enclaves leads me to my third major concern – new requirements for homeland security.

The National Strategy for Homeland Security signed by the President in July 2002 makes homeland security a shared responsibility for which the federal government and the several sovereign states are jointly accountable. In sworn testimony before this Commission (30 June 2005, Admiral Sullivan) we learned that the Air Force did not consult with the Department of Homeland Security prior to the May 13 release of the BRAC recommendations. Just this past Monday, 8 August 2005, the Washington Post ran an article titled, “War Plans Being Drafted to Counter Terror Attacks in the United States”. This is an area where the TAGs and the Governors can assist the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security in better understanding what is realistic on the ground and can help work through the complex scenarios the nation might face. To the best of our knowledge, neither the Air Force nor the Department of Defense have consulted with the TAGs on this vital shared federal and state defense planning document. That cannot be the way forward if we are to adequately protect the American people with the resources and organizations we currently have at our disposal.

As you held hearings around the nation, you heard sworn testimony from Governors, Senators, Representatives, and National Guard leaders about the serious negative impact that the loss of Air Guard flying units would have on homeland defense. Not every loss or shift is an insurmountable problem, but without good communication between the states and the Department of Defense, there was no effort to adequately assess what states' really need. The world has changed greatly in the past four years and as we adapt to those changes, it is critical to avoid “group think” and to communicate with those who see homeland defense from regional and state lenses as well as looking at a national picture. It is only by combining our insights that we can rationally use the nation's defense assets to their best effect. I will not go into any further detail, except to say that we have submitted for the record a statement from AGAUS referencing homeland security needs and issues and believe this is an area of great concern for our governors and the citizens of our states.

The fourth area AGAUS feels must be addressed is the need for more discussion regarding emerging missions. AGAUS recognizes the need for change as legacy aircraft retire and new weapons are brought on line. As demonstrated by the historic success of the Total Force we are full partners in the transformation of the Air Force.

We in the National Guard are pleased to be a partner with the Air Force in emerging, transformational missions such as Information Operations, Air Operation Centers, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. However, we do not have a good understanding of what the actual requirements will be for these and other emerging missions. We are also concerned that there does not appear to be adequate planning or budgeting for the training and other aspects of performing these missions. For example, a recent ruling by the Air Force Office of the Judge Advocate indicated that missions planned for Alaska and North Dakota may not be permissible in Title 32 status. In addition, there is apparently an issue regarding FAA approval to fly Predators in any state besides Nevada. The Title 10/Title 32 issue needs to be addressed prior to proceeding with some of the emerging mission areas and a full discussion of the missions needs to proceed so that other problems like FAA approval come to light and plans can be made for a way forward.

As we discuss emerging missions, it is also essential that we ensure that there is a bridge to the future. The single most important asset in the Air National Guard is the experienced men and women who serve in our community based units. We must retain these personnel while we work through transformation. The Air Force's Future Total Force concepts are far reaching and dynamic. The TAGs want to be partners in defining that future force and in helping to avoid pitfalls. One size does not fit all. The Air Guard should be included in the operation of stand alone units, to include the FCA, C17 and other aircraft.

We urge the National Guard Bureau, Congress, and the Air Force to look at bridging options that would allow us to retain our qualified pilots, mechanics and other specialist until the new weapon systems are fielded. The number of aircraft to be purchased remains unclear. What is clear is that there are still basic issues of law, organization, requirements, and budgeting that need to be resolved before we can move into emerging missions. The TAGs look forward to helping to identify and resolve these concerns, but to do that, more discussion is needed.

The fifth and final area I wish to cover is the question of cost savings. As you all know, the GAO reported that 47% of the recurring savings from this BRAC round are associated with eliminating jobs currently held by military personnel. However, as GAO and others have noted, there is no plan to reduce end-strength levels. Without reducing end-strength there are no dollar savings from military personnel that can be applied elsewhere. I hate to say it, but this seems to me to be Enron-style math. If you are still paying salaries and benefits to the same number of people, the savings simply do not exist. In fact, in many cases, proposed Air Guard recommendations would actually lead to increased costs. For example, as Senator Biden testified to the Commission, when the cost to retrain the 75% of the personnel that would not move with the airplanes was

factored in, even if the assumptions about eliminating positions were retained, the recommendations for the New Castle County Air Guard Base would lead to a minimum of \$5.4 million in costs to the nation, not the \$29 million in projected savings. If you reduce the \$29 million in projected savings by the amount attributed to reductions in military personnel positions, the overall costs of the realignment go up even more.

AGAUS supports the idea that excess infrastructure is a drain on limited military resources. However, we cannot agree that the Air Force's BRAC recommendations for the Air Guard address that issue. Instead, the recommendations focus on programmatic decisions like squadron sizes that do not have adequate analytical support. They lead to the creation of enclave bases whose validity and viability have not been properly assessed. They ignore critical homeland security concerns and needs. They rely on a move toward emerging missions that are vague and face potential legal and practical obstacles that have not been addressed. And, they simply are not likely to save the Air Force money.

The set of recommendations we are providing today address the key AGAUS issues. Again, I thank the Commissioners for allowing AGAUS the opportunity to clarify the concerns of the Adjutants General and hope that it is helpful as you enter your final deliberations.

TESTIMONY OF
MAJOR GENERAL ROGER LEMPKE
PRESIDENT, ADJUTANTS GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES
(AGAUS)

BRAC COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC

11 August 2005

I am Major General Roger Lempke, Adjutant General for Nebraska, and president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS). I am testifying today at the request of the Commission. Joining me today is Major General Frank Vavala, Adjutant General of Delaware, and Major General Tom Macguire, Adjutant General of New York, Major General Mike Haugen, Adjutant General of North Dakota, all representing the AGAUS.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to my testimony I am submitting on behalf of the AGAUS for the record the following items:

- A set of specific recommendations based on my previous letter to the Commission.
- A data book containing the AGAUS analysis of the BRAC report including positions on unit size, homeland security, and other significant issues.
- Answers to questions I recently received from the Commission.
- A paper by NGAUS on the role of the National Guard in national defense and homeland security.

As I and other Adjutants General have previously testified the realignment recommendations contained in the DoD BRAC report if adopted will send the Air National

Guard down an untested and uncertain path. The numerous unit retirements and aircraft movements as ANG sites downsize to enclaves will have a ripple affect on personnel, readiness, and the ability to support homeland security needs that will be irreversible. The savings to DoD from these combined actions are negligible at best and most likely non-existent.

Mr. Principi has stated that it would be irresponsible to simply reject large portions of the BRAC report out of hand. We believe it would also be irresponsible to accept a series of recommendations that will put the safety of our nation's citizens at risk by the systematic elimination of the community based Air National Guard force.

We are presenting to the Commission today a set of recommended changes to the BRAC list that respect what the BRAC law intended to accomplish, namely infrastructure reductions to save money, and remove items that should be addressed in the planning process for the Air Force Future Total Force. Specifically, our set of recommendations:

- Honor the BRAC charter to deal with infrastructure; therefore, we do not make recommendations concerning actual closure recommendations. Each location and community was provided ample opportunity to present its case to the Commission. The Commission will assess the merit of each closure recommendation based on DoD analysis and community input.
- We excise recommendations that tread into the area of state rights with regard to Title 32.
- We attempt to not impose on recommendations involving equipment in the active duty or Air Force Reserve.
- We recognize and accept some recommendations that are programmatic but nonetheless promote transformation with a well-defined path ahead.

- Most importantly, through our set of recommendations we seek to protect the nation's interests by eliminating programmatic moves that do not save money yet may severely diminish capabilities needed for homeland security and homeland defense.

In general our set recommendations provide for:

- A flying unit in every state, and
- Adjustments to bring flying units to sizes that have proven to be optimum for the Air National Guard based on our military judgment.

Most importantly, adopting our set of recommendations will permit the Adjutants General, the National Guard Bureau, and the Air Force to work together to transform to a modern and more lethal Air Force. Removing prescriptive programmatic actions from the BRAC report will give us the opportunity to bridge the gap between today's legacy force and tomorrow's Air Force with plans that retain our experienced people and sustain current capabilities needed to support current Air Force needs until transitions occur.

Finally, our set of recommendations does not attempt to address every single aircraft movement recommended by the Air Force with a counter recommendation. We do not believe the Commission should be bound by this constraint either. Addressing the changes prudent at this time and removing the others will provide the flexibility needed to properly plan the transformation to the Future Total Force. For example, aircraft retirements can be set to coincide with new mission introductions so that Air National Guard leaders and service members have a clear understanding of their roles in the future Air Force. Our set of recommendations will help bring the states, the National Guard Bureau, and Air Force.

To conclude let me speak to the charge that the ANG will not change. Indeed, we have not changed in our first and most important mission of Homeland Defense since 1636. The Adjutants General do apologize for our commitment to the defense of our homeland and America's people—to our freedom and way of life. Our Governors and each of us remain committed to that cause.

You may be aware of the NORTHCOM comments regarding them being in charge of homeland missions. We disagree first with the idea of losing civilian control of the military and secondly with the idea that NORTHCOM or the Air Forces knows what is best for the people in our states.

We look to the Governors to lead us, with elected federal officials, and the President, to ensure the Governors have the tools to preserve the peace, freedom, and democracy at home. The National Guard is and always has been the front line of defending one of the most basic tenets of our democracy—our people against any terrorist—foreign or domestic, any time, any place.

The Air Force BRAC does not adequately address this primary need to provide for homeland defense.

America deserves better.