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Executive Correspondence
DON 5277

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025
<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

July 21, 2005

BRAC Commission

JUL 25 2005

Received

J. KEITH KENNEDY, STAFF DIRECTOR
TERRENCE E. SAUVAIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

General James T. Hill, USA Ret.
Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Hill:

Thank you for taking time to meet with me recently to discuss base realignment and closure recommendations, particularly the Air Force proposal to realign Eielson Air Force Base to "warm" status. Your task is not an enviable one and I commend you for your continued service to our nation.

As we discussed, it is clear to me that there was a complete disregard for the impact of the Eielson recommendation on joint training and readiness. The Air Force makes absolute no sense in their decision to eliminate A-10 aircraft in Alaska at a time when the Army's presence in the state is growing. The new Stryker Brigade at Fort Wainwright and the new Airborne Brigade at Fort Richardson, along with the 3rd Air Support Operation Squadron (ASOS), jointly train with Eielson's A-10 aircraft on the Alaska ranges everyday. The absence of A-10 aircraft in the region will certainly degrade mission readiness by leaving units without aircraft to conduct close air support training, which is critical to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Further, the recommendation completely ignores Eielson's vital strategic advantage for current and future missions and total force mobilization. During final deliberations, the Commission must consider that the primary mission of the A-10 aircraft stationed at Eielson is to reinforce our units on the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Straits. Considering our plans to reduce the number of Army aircraft and ground troops in Korea, this mission is of even greater strategic value and importance. Please ask the Commission staff to provide you the details of a Pacific Command memo, dated 9 December 2004, to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff which responds to potential Air Force BRAC recommendations.

Finally, there is no such thing as a "warm" facility in mid-winter Alaska – a facility is either operational or not. The Air Force analysis did not include a realistic cost of maintaining Eielson in a "warm" status as compared to fully utilizing the base for the key missions of air defense, close air support, and joint training and operations with the Army. The poor analysis was revealed last week when the Eielson site survey concluded an additional 1,000 personnel are needed to maintain the installation than originally anticipated in the COBRA model. This finding will reduce projected Eielson savings by more than \$1.1 billion.

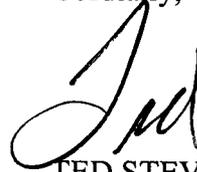
Executive Correspondence
DCN 5277

General James T. Hill
July 21, 2005
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Please review this matter. The Air Force recommendation for A-10s at Eielson grossly undervalues the loss of joint training opportunities and the resulting loss of combat capability, particularly for the United States Army in Alaska. We must ensure A-10s remain at Eielson. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

With best wishes,

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted", written in a cursive style.

TED STEVENS
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense

THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI, CHAIRMAN
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J. KEITH KENNEDY, STAFF DIRECTOR
TERRENCE E. SAUVAIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

General Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton, USAF Ret.
Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Newton:

Thank you for taking time to meet with me recently to discuss base realignment and closure recommendations, particularly the Air Force proposal to realign Eielson Air Force Base to "warm" status. Your task is not an enviable one and I commend you for your continued service to our nation.

As we discussed, it is clear to me that there was a complete disregard for the impact of the Eielson recommendation on joint training and readiness. The Air Force makes absolute no sense in their decision to eliminate A-10 aircraft in Alaska at a time when the Army's presence in the state is growing. The new Stryker Brigade at Fort Wainwright and the new Airborne Brigade at Fort Richardson, along with the 3rd Air Support Operation Squadron (ASOS), jointly train with Eielson's A-10 aircraft on the Alaska ranges everyday. The absence of A-10 aircraft in the region will certainly degrade mission readiness by leaving units without aircraft to conduct close air support training, which is critical to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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General Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton
July 21, 2005
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With best wishes,

Cordially,

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TED STEVENS
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense