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July 27, 2005

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Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr., (USN, Ret)  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Admiral Gehman:

Thank you for your recent phone call and continued willingness to discuss base realignment and closure recommendations that are important to the state of Alaska. Your task is not an enviable one and I commend you for your continued service to our nation. I am writing to express my concern with the Air Force proposal to realign Eielson Air Force Base to a "warm" status. The proposal is a broken recommendation that does not deliver promised savings, ignores strategic value, and undermines joint training opportunities.

First, the Air Force analysis was flawed by not including 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. There is no such thing as a "warm" facility in mid-winter Alaska – a facility is either operational or not. Their poor analysis was revealed during the Eielson site survey when it was determined that an additional 1,000 personnel are needed to maintain the installation than originally anticipated. This finding will reduce projected Eielson savings by over \$1 billion.

Further, we both know it was a poor assumption to count the salaries of every active duty person they moved from Eielson as cost savings, even though they are not going to leave the service. The General Accountability Office (GAO) was critical of this flaw in their July 1<sup>st</sup> report to the Commission. In the report, GAO noted that 47 percent of projected net annual recurring savings is associated with relocating personnel to other areas. To compare, the same personnel savings account for 82 percent of the claimed Eielson annual recurring savings. If you just required the Air Force to buy back the transfer of personnel and added a modest addition to the "warm" base leave behind at Eielson, the difference is remarkable. An annual recurring savings of \$229 million goes to \$27 million!

The Air Force recommendation also completely ignores Eielson's vital strategic advantage for current and future missions and total force mobilization. The primary mission of units based at Eielson is to reinforce our units on the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Straits. Considering our plans to reduce the number of ground troops in Korea and Marines on Okinawa, this mission is of even greater strategic value and importance. Eielson aircraft are critical to defeating any enemy offensive and removing them will significantly increase response time to any contingency. 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.

Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr., (USN, Ret)  
July 27, 2005  
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Finally, 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 remove all A-10 and F-16 aircraft from interior Alaska at a time when the Army's presence in the region is growing. The converted Stryker Brigade at Fort Wainwright and the new Airborne Brigade at Fort Richardson train everyday with Eielson aircraft on Alaska's 63,000 square mile range complex. The absence of aircraft in the region will certainly degrade mission readiness. Of great concern to me is close air support training, which is critical to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Please continue to review this matter. The Air Force decision meets the test of significant deviation in all four primary military value considerations and should be overturned by the Commission, leaving both A-10 and F-16 aircraft at Eielson. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense