

DCN: 8080

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4304

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

August 22, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to add new information to the record regarding homeland defense issues as they relate to Naval Station Ingleside and Ellington Field in Texas.

The Department of Defense (DoD) recently issued "Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support," which outlines a new approach to homeland defense. This significant new strategy document was issued in June, weeks after DoD forwarded the closure and realignment recommendations to your Commission. Additionally, there is no evidence that the concepts expressed in the new strategy were taken into account with respect to the Ingleside and Ellington recommendations.

Specifically, the new strategy advocates "...air and maritime interception capabilities necessary to maintain U.S. freedom of action, secure the rights and obligations of the United States, and protect the nation at a safe distance." This approach makes water and airspace along the U.S. border and the Gulf of Mexico critical to homeland defense.

However, DoD's recommendation to close the Ingleside base, which is capable of accommodating any surface warship, and retire Ellington Field's 147th Fighter Wing Air National Guard F-16 combat fighter wing would leave America's national assets "unprotected" from air and maritime, multi-pronged terrorist threats. With the Gulf's enormous energy resources, it seems particularly risky to compromise the homeland defense of Texas and this nation by giving up such capabilities that, once gone, can never be reconstituted.

We respectfully request that the Commission work with DoD's BRAC recommendations to ensure that the precepts expressed in the "Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support" are adequately addressed in your deliberations. If it does so, we believe the Commission will remove both installations from the closure and realignment lists.

Sincerely,



Kay Bailey Hutchison