

SPENCER BACHUS  
6TH DISTRICT, ALABAMA

COMMITTEES:  
FINANCIAL SERVICES  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER CREDIT  
TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
JUDICIARY  
GOP STEERING COMMITTEE  
REGION IX

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC

442 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4921  
1900 INTERNATIONAL PARK DRIVE  
SUITE 107  
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35243  
(205) 969-2296  
703 SECOND AVENUE NORTH  
P.O. BOX 502  
CLANTON, AL 35046  
(205) 280-0704  
<http://www.house.gov/bachus>

August 18, 2005

The Honorable James V. Hansen  
Commissioner  
BRAC 2005 Independent Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Via Facsimile (703) 699-2735

Dear Commissioner Hansen,



As you know, I have contacted the Commission in the past to express my concern with DOD BRAC recommendations for the Air Guard, specifically in reference to the methodology used in the recommendation to strip the 117th Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham, Alabama, of its aircraft. Under the BRAC recommendations, six Air Guard units rated lower in military value than Birmingham had their number of tankers maintained or increased. It has recently been brought to my attention that BRAC Commissioner Harold Gehman expressed similar concerns at a July 18 BRAC hearing, noting that BRAC recommendations for the Air Guard substantially deviated from the BRAC law by using "military judgment" over military value.

In that hearing, Commissioner Gehman noted that:

"This recommendation...appears to substantially deviate from the BRAC legislation. It appears to violate several standing regulations and laws. And it appears to have several hidden policy issues embedded in it -- policy issues like there shall -- not every state shall have a flying unit; policy issues like we want **the active component to have better access to airframes so they can fly them more often, and therefore, we're going to use the other guy's airframes more often.**"  
(transcript page 97)

"So in my time here, I would simply like to request that the Air National Guard, the National Guard Bureau and the Air Force have got to help us figure out what to do with what appears to be an unworkable and unsatisfactory set of recommendations. And I would just like to add that I would request from you all commissioner-level briefings in which we would have the time to go through my 32 questions -- my understandings or my perceptions of places where you've deviated from the BRAC legislation, where you have misapplied military value; you've substituted military judgments when the numbers didn't work out right. And this is going to take a long time. And I solicit your help on how to proceed

through that. That is my request from both of you, General James and General Wood." (Transcript page 98)

It does not make sense for the 117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham to lose its fleet to locations that rate lower in military value and possess a decreased capability in terms of runway length and hangar capacity. I urge the Commission to continue to look thoroughly and skeptically at the DOD Air Guard recommendations. I trust that the Commission will follow existing BRAC statutes by ensuring that aircraft are strategically placed according to demonstrated capability and infrastructure. I believe such considerations would dictate that the KC-135 fleet will remain at the 117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Bachus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Spencer Bachus  
Member of Congress

cc: Chairman Anthony J. Principi  
Commissioner Harold W. Gehman, Jr.

STB/jb

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