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United States Senate

August 10, 2005

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Mr. Anthony Principi
Defense Base Closure & Realignment Commission
Suite 600
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Mr. Principi:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. I appreciate your input on this matter.

Since its founding, America has sought to tailor its military basing decisions to the nation's overall defense posture, closing bases in some areas and opening or consolidating facilities in other areas, according to the needs of the uniformed services at a given point in time.

The current base realignment and closure movement stemmed from the need for cost-cutting in the Department of Defense (DoD) following the Cold War. This most recent round of BRAC actions was sanctioned in the Fiscal Year 2005 National Defense Authorization Act. In an effort to remove politics from the BRAC process, the impartial nine member BRAC Commission has been reviewing recommendations submitted by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld earlier this year. This Commission has until September 8, 2005 to evaluate the Secretary's recommendations against eight criteria and make adjustments as it sees fit. By September 23, the President must either forward the report to Congress or return it to the Commission for further action. If the report is sent to Congress, its findings become law after 45 days unless Congress enacts a joint resolution to reject it in its entirety.

As Virginia's senior U.S. Senator, I have always worked and will continue to work to minimize the negative impacts of this base closure and realignment round on Virginians. I am concerned with some aspects of the Secretary's recommendations which I believe do not conform with the law. I will continue to study the process and labor to ensure that the law is followed. I am proud that Virginia has the highest military spending per capita of all the states in our Union. This is testament to centuries of dedication by Virginians to participate actively – many times in the lead – in our nation's defense. For 27 years, maintaining Virginia's strong contribution to America's national security has been among my very top priorities in the Senate, and this focus will continue.

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In my capacity as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I feel an obligation to our men and women in uniform, no matter where they are stationed, and I support the BRAC process as a way to take politics as much as possible out of our military's basing decisions. In addition, I believe it is a policy that helps our nation meet new defense challenges.

In my efforts to help address pressing issues, it is important to maintain an awareness of the interests and concerns of the people I have the honor to represent. I value the thoughts and concerns that you have shared with me. Thank you again for writing me.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Warner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Warner

JW/sez