

August 16, 2005



The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

During the BRAC hearings televised on CSPAN in July, USAF Lt Gen Woods made statements that I found troubling. I am an aircraft mechanic with the Missouri ANG in St. Louis. Right now I stand to lose my job due to the BRAC, so my concerns are personally motivated and biased. But I also believe the same type of concerns may be voiced by my ANG counterparts in Cape Cod, Portland, Springfield, and numerous other cities affected by the BRAC. These questions may have already been addressed, but for my own peace of mind, I have to ask them.

Lt Gen Woods stated that the USAF would like to increase fighter squadron aircraft numbers to 24 PAA (primary assigned aircraft) to maximize unit efficiency. He also stated that, due to their high level of experience, ANG fighter squadrons may achieve the same efficiency with only 18 PAA. This brings several questions to mind.

1. If 18 PAA is acceptable for the ANG, why are F-15 units in Atlantic City, Jacksonville, and New Orleans projected to receive 24 aircraft each? If they were set at 18 PAA, that would free up 18 more aircraft for another squadron of F-15s to remain in St. Louis.
2. Currently, ANG F-15 squadrons are set at 15 PAA, but already have more aircraft than that on their ramps (St. Louis has 19). If 18 PAA is an acceptable amount, would it not make sense to leave the aircraft in place and simply change the funding to reflect? Why go through the trouble to change when the units are already successfully handling more aircraft than they are funded for anyway?
3. What benefit is gained by wasting time, money, and jobs to shuffle fighter aircraft around when the USAF goals for ANG F-15 squadrons relating to PAA actually exists already?

An additional plan for the F-15 community is to build an Aggressor Squadron at Nellis AFB, NV with F-15Cs taken from Mountain Home AFB and 131 FW Missouri ANG. It was reported in a April issue of the Air Force Times that Gen Jumper would like a new Aggressor Squadron to provide adversary training for the F/A-22 Raptor. Once again, this plan brings several questions to mind.

1. The Navy and Marines built their Aggressor Squadrons with older aircraft such as the F/A-18A, F-5E, F-16A, and A-4s. Why will the USAF take F-15C aircraft from frontline combat service for Aggressor duty when perfectly capable F-15As are available from the ANG as the F-15A to F-15C conversion continues?
2. During the budget cuts of the 1990s, the USAF cut their Aggressor force to one squadron of F-16s at Nellis AFB. When there is barely enough funding for existing programs and the BRAC process is meant to save money, is it financially responsible to take more money to rebuild the Aggressor force at this time?
3. The article in the Air Force Times also reported that a purpose of the new Aggressor Squadron is to provide better training for the F/A-22 Raptor pilots. The F-16 is a more maneuverable dogfighter than the F-15 and numerous F-16s are being retired due to the BRAC. If another Aggressor Squadron is needed, does it not make sense to use the F-16 instead of the F-15 for this task? Additionally, considering the F/A-22 program has been cut to 179 aircraft, is there really a need for this new squadron?

Lt Gen Woods also spoke about "new and exciting" careers that will be available to affected personnel as aircraft are moved around. He mentioned Red Horse, security, and other careers. I can tell you personally, that the aircraft mechanics in St. Louis work on aircraft because they want to work on aircraft. We find the thought of being retrained to these "new and exciting" careers to be an insult and have no interest whatsoever in these new jobs. I guarantee this message will be echoed at ANG units throughout the country. The ANG will lose thousands of highly qualified people and USAF is foolish to believe that they can maintain recruiting numbers for these units without any aircraft.

Even though these points I have raised seem specific when one considers the grand scheme of the BRAC process, I believe they point to overall mistakes that have been made. The BRAC recommendations, with concern to the ANG, seem to be arbitrary, without merit, and contrary to the whole purpose of the BRAC. Please take my concerns, and the concerns of many other Guardsmen affected by the BRAC, and consider them as your committee concludes the difficult task ahead of you. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Chris Boehlein  
Aircraft Mechanic  
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