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RANKING DEMOCRAT:

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

August 18, 2005

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The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman, 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
2005 Independent Commission
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I am writing to reinforce the position of the Adjutants General Association of the United States with respect to the Department of Defense BRAC recommendations pertaining to the Air National Guard.

Although AGAUS is not opposed to the BRAC process, it is opposed to the use of the BRAC process to provide "cover" for what amounts to programmatic actions. I, too, am opposed to this blatant misuse of the BRAC law which we in Congress created.

In the specific case of Minnesota, there is no question that the Duluth-based 148th Fighter Wing's Block 25 F-16s need to be retired in the near future. Obviously, I want the 148th to receive a viable follow-on mission. Modern infrastructure, past operational performance, and recruiting/retention successes combine to make the 148th one of the premier Air National Guard organizations in the country. But those issues and considerations are programmatic and should not fall under the auspices of BRAC.

As you begin your final deliberations, I urge you to favorably consider the AGAUS position. DOD's programmatic recommendations should be removed from the commission's final list.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,



James L. Oberstar, M.C.

JLO/mb