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COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

CHAIRMAN



BRAC Commission

AUG 23 2005

Received

Congress of the United States  
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Washington, DC 20515-3504  
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The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
2521 South Clark Street  
Suite 600  
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

Due to various circumstances last week, BRAC staffers were unable to speak with me as planned regarding the Pentagon's proposed closure of the Mansfield Lahm Airport Air Guard Station in my congressional district. I appreciate the difficult decisions and challenges that you face in the week ahead, and wanted you to be aware of my concerns as you begin your final deliberations.

- **The aircraft assigned to the 179th Airlift Wing at Mansfield Lahm Airport were specifically purchased by Congress for use by the 179th and the Air National Guard.** The Department of Defense BRAC recommendation deviates from congressional intent by recommending these aircraft for relocation to Reserve and active-duty Air Force units. The recommendation is somewhat unique, as many of the controversial proposals for the Air National Guard involve moving aircraft from one Guard base to another. In Mansfield's case, the attempt is to outfit the active duty and the Reserve with planes that my colleagues and I intended for use by the Guard.
- **The 179th has exceptional manning rates--among the best in the Air National Guard.** The unit, currently staffed at 104 percent of authorized manning, is slated to lose its C-130s to Alabama and Arkansas, both of which have poorer manning rates: an average of less than 96 percent. In light of General Gary Heckman's comment to the Commission two weeks ago that the Air Force faces "acute [personnel tempo] issues, particularly in the C-130 force," the Pentagon's plan is counter-intuitive, especially considering the current high operating tempo.
- **Cost-benefit analyses do not support the recommendation to close the 179th and relocate its aircraft.** The Pentagon's estimated cost to close the 179th is \$21.6 million (\$15.9 million to transfer planes to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, \$4.8 million to transfer planes to Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, and \$900,000 for related personnel transfers). Clearly, a number of additional costs have not been considered in this estimate. As I noted above, the Mansfield recommendation centers on transferring aircraft from a part-time Guard base to a full-time active-duty base. The Ohio Adjutant General's Department has informed me that this part-time to full-time change will result in **additional personnel costs of nearly \$55 million annually.**

The aircraft transfers will also mean that Maxwell Air Force Base will have two C-130 variants at one facility. This will require either aircraft conversions to ensure continuity or additional training

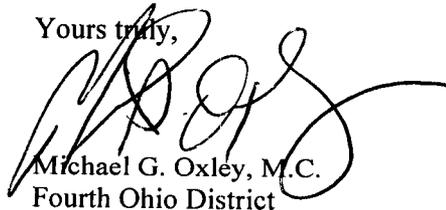
and multiple qualifications for crews, adding an **additional \$41.2 million in annual costs**. The cost would be exponentially higher at Little Rock, which would house many more C-130 variants should the Commission sustain all of the Pentagon's recommendations.

These figures should be considered in contrast to the \$13.7 million in one-time costs necessary to house four more C-130s at Mansfield. Meeting the Air Force's goal for C-130s by increasing the 179th from eight planes to twelve is significantly less expensive than the BRAC proposal to close Mansfield. **The Pentagon's grossly understated estimate of \$21.6 million for complete closure at Mansfield, versus just \$13.7 million to increase to twelve planes, clearly shows that the proposal would result in a negative return on the taxpayers' investment.**

As the Commission has noted several times, the Air Force's BRAC planners did not properly communicate with the Adjutants General when compiling their recommendations. Mansfield is a prime example of this problem. The Army's BRAC recommendations, recognizing the recruitment and retention value of the north central Ohio region, include a consolidation of Army Reserve and Army Guard units to a new facility to be located at Mansfield Lahm Airport. In my view, the Army recommendation makes more sense in the context of combining the Army Reserve and the Army Guard alongside the Air Guard at a consolidated joint-use facility. This would allow the Department of Defense to maintain a strong presence in the Mansfield area at a price significantly less than the Air Force would spend to close the base.

Consistent with all applicable rules and regulations governing your work, I ask that you give this alternative, money-saving proposal serious consideration. Thank you again for your fine service to our nation.

Yours truly,



Michael G. Oxley, M.C.  
Fourth Ohio District

MGO/jbd

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