

**Congress of the United States**

Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2005

BRAC Commission

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

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Received

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you and the commission consider the Department of Defense's (DoD) recommendation, we are writing to reiterate our strong support for Dyess Air Force Base. We urge the Commission to (1) approve the Defense Department recommendation to consolidate the B-1 fleet at Dyess and (2) disapprove the Defense Department recommendation to transfer two C-130 squadrons from Dyess.

By statute, the Secretary of DoD "shall give priority consideration to the military value criteria." The selection criteria, particularly the military value criteria, and DoD certified data fully support consolidating the B-1s at Dyess and keeping the C-130s there as well. We also note that a primary goal of the BRAC process is cost savings. These two actions clearly meet this important goal.

The DoD certified data confirm that Dyess is one of our Nation's best large aircraft bases. It has hosted the B-1s since the aircraft was introduced more than 20 years ago and has hosted C-130s for over 40 years. Dyess has handled more than 90 large aircraft in the past and the DoD certified data confirm that Dyess can support the consolidated B-1 fleet and, at the same time, its C-130s.

We support the DoD's military judgment to consolidate the B-1 fleet at one base. Consolidation will provide significant efficiencies in training, operations and maintenance. Importantly, consolidation will save the DoD \$1.8 billion, savings that are a key goal of the BRAC process. If the Commission does not approve the consolidation, the DoD will have to bear these costs.

We understand that there are certain allegations concerning the B-1 fleet being at one location. We support the Defense Department's comprehensive analysis and military judgment on this issue.

With the B-1 fleet having been reduced from 90 aircraft to 67, consolidation is fully consistent with the DoD's longstanding policy of consolidating other fleets of less than 75 aircraft, such as the B-58s, F-111s, U-2s, F-117s, B-2s and JSTARS. Moreover, the overall bomber fleet will still remain dispersed, with four bases having bomber aircraft, *i.e.*, Whiteman (B-2s), Dyess (B-1s), Barksdale (B-52s) and Minot (B-52s).

In summary, the DoD's recommendation is fully consistent with the BRAC selection criteria, which give priority to military value, and is supported by the DoD's military judgment. The Commission may overturn a DoD recommendation only if the DoD substantially deviated from the selection criteria. Clearly, in this case, the DoD did not. Accordingly, we urge the Commission to approve the transfer of B-1s to Dyess.

We do not agree, however, with the Defense Department's recommendation to transfer the C-130s from Dyess. First, Dyess has a higher military value than the bases to which its C-130s would be transferred. Second, it will cost an additional \$18 million in MILCON funds and require an additional 225 personnel to transfer Dyess's C-130s to these lower-ranked bases. Third, Dyess's C-130s have worked on joint operations with Army units Forts Bliss, Hood and Sill. Furthermore, the Air Force has advised us that "no formal capacity analysis was accomplished for Little Rock AFB by the Air Force."

It appears that the DoD's position may be based on possible benefits of consolidation. However, unlike the B-1 consolidation, the Air Force has not shown that the transfer of Dyess's C-130s will result in efficiencies. Consolidating the B-1 fleet at Dyess allows the consolidation of fleet-wide operations and maintenance. However, even if Dyess's C-130s were to be moved, the C-130 fleet will still be distributed among numerous bases nationwide, thus foregoing the efficiencies of fleet consolidation.

We also understand that all of Dyess's C-130s are the same model, *i.e.*, the H1 model. This results in efficiencies in operations and maintenance at Dyess and supports keeping the H1 models at Dyess. Consolidation at Little Rock, however, would create a mixture of C-130 models, *i.e.*, Es, Hs, H1s, H3s and Js, each having their own operation and maintenance problems.

In summary, given Dyess's higher military value, the MILCON costs savings, the personnel cost savings, the lack of a formal capacity analysis for Little Rock AFB and the inherent, longstanding efficiencies at Dyess, the proposal to transfer Dyess's C-130s is clearly a substantial deviation from the DoD criteria.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

  
U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

  
U.S. Senator John Cornyn

  
U.S. Representative Randy Neugebauer

C: The Honorable James H. Bilbray  
The Honorable Philip Coyle  
Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr., (USN, Ret)  
The Honorable James V. Hansen  
General James T. Hill (USA, Ret)  
The Honorable Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton (USAF, Ret)  
The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner  
Brigadier General Sue E. Turner (USAF, Ret)