

DCN: 8658



State of North Dakota

Office of the Governor

John Hoeven Governor

Commission

2005

September 1, 2005

Received

Chairman Anthony Principi
2005 BRAC Commission
2521 S Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington VA 22202

BRAC Commission

SEP 01 2005

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Dear Chairman Principi:

As you and your staff finalize your recommendations, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my position on the BRAC recommendations for North Dakota.

As stated in the Aug 4, 2005 letter to you from myself and the Congressional Delegation, North Dakota welcomes the UAV mission. We believe the synergy of a joint mission between the North Dakota National Guard and Grand Forks Air Force Base, along with the resources and expertise of the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences at the University of North Dakota, will result in a true UAV center of excellence. I want to repeat, however, that I do not consent to the removal of our Block 15 F16s without a manned follow-on flying mission.

In order to recruit, retain, train, and ensure career progression for our pilots it is critical that we have a separate manned flying mission. I therefore want to ensure that no language in the Commission recommendation prohibits or inhibits our ability to seek and obtain a follow-on manned flying mission. In my letter to LTG Blum of Aug 5, 2005 which was provided to your staff, we identified 39 Block 42 F16s that were scheduled for retirement that would be ideal for the "Happy Hooligans" as a future fighter mission and we are also currently working with National Guard Bureau and LTG Blum on a possible light cargo aircraft mission.

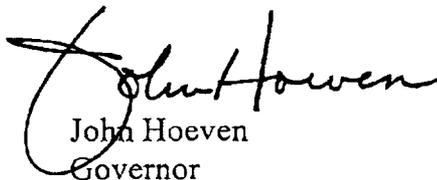
I believe the Commission clearly understands the importance of the National Guard to our state and nation. This is more than evident in the response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Some 10,000 National Guard soldiers and airman will be on state active duty in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida by the end of today and another 10,000 by the end of tomorrow. In addition, Air Guard flying assets are being provided to the region from virtually every corner of the nation. All of this in addition to the National Guard's continued support in the war on terror.

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Again, I wish to thank the entire Commission and staff for their tireless work and dedication to a very difficult task, in particular your willingness to address the significant concerns that I have as Governor of North Dakota regarding our ability to respond to state and federal emergencies.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
Governor

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C: Rory Cooper
Senator Kent Conrad
Senator Byron Dorgan
Representative Earl Pomeroy
Dick Walstad, Chairman Air Guard Support Task Force