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August 16, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman and Commission

We understand that the Commission will soon reach a decision point in its examination of the Naval Postgraduate School and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) for closure or realignment. We also understand that some Commissioners are considering a change in the Air Force organizational structure and governance of the Air Force Institute of Technology. We are concerned about the effect of that change on Air Force education, and recommend against it.

As a result of a study conducted in 2002 to review graduate educational processes, the Secretaries of the Navy and the Air Force formed an Educational Alliance between the Naval Postgraduate School and the Air Force Institute of Technology. Since the Educational Alliance was established both schools have leveraged programs, faculties, and investments, and have made tangible gains integrating and consolidating programs and courses. Both of their respective Boards have been deeply involved in that effort. As a result, the Alliance is working.

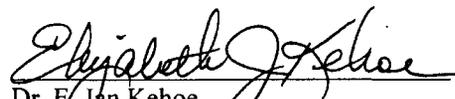
Unlike the Naval Postgraduate School, the Air Force Institute of Technology is a graduate school within Air University and is accredited as such. As a part of Air University, it is academically and pedagogically supported through coordination with the advanced and post-secondary education and training missions of the United States Air Force. The Air University Board of Visitors is a structurally appropriate governance organization for oversight of a graduate school as a part of the University. Separating the Air Force Institute of Technology from the governance and support of Air University would threaten the effectiveness of the Institute for the Air Force and weaken the prospect of continued accreditation for the Institute as well as Air University.

To ensure the future success of the Educational Alliance, maintain fidelity with our academic accrediting agency, and ensure optimal use of resources, we recommend no change in the Air University organizational structure. Progress, challenges, and concerns relating to the Alliance have been and will continue to be shared through the reporting process to the Secretary, and addressed through the Air Force educational structure.

We welcome any opportunity to meet with you, the other commissioners, and analysts to further explain our views.

Very truly yours,


Ann C. Petersen, Esquire
Chair, Air University Board of Visitors


Dr. E. Jan Kehoe
Chair-Elect, Air University Board of Visitors

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