



THE LINCOLN ELECTRIC COMPANY

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BRAC Commission

JUL 27 2005

Received

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Subject: Cleveland DFAS

Dear Chairman Principi:

I am writing in support of keeping the Cleveland Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and its 1,200 men and women here in our city. The realignment of the DFAS and moving operations out of Cleveland would do more harm than good and would be counter to the Commission's mission.

The hardworking employees at Cleveland DFAS are dedicated to serving our country's military men and women – active duty and retired -- and their families everyday. Here in Northeast Ohio, we have seen too many of our friends and neighbors suffer job loss through no fault of their own. Moving DFSA out of our city would be another blow to the area's economy.

I urge that the Commission recommend keeping Cleveland DFAS. We need the organization's services and the employees of Cleveland DFAS need to be rewarded for their excellent work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John S. Petkovsek".

John S. Petkovsek
Director, Environmental, Health & Safety
The Lincoln Electric Company
22801 St. Clair Avenue
Euclid, OH 44117
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BRAC Commission
Ronald I. Parks
9202 Scotford
Helotes, TX 78028 JUL 27 2005

July 23, 2005

Received

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear BRAC Commission,

I have served honorably as a Defense Department linguist for 26 years, having learned two different languages during my career, one of which is a less-commonly-taught language that I currently use in my work supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. I am writing you because I am shocked and outraged at your recent decision to consider closing the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California, and moving the mission to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Do you honestly think that the 2,000 staff and faculty at DLI, many of whom are native speakers and teachers of languages used in the Global War on Terror, are just going to up and leave Monterey to "follow the mission" to Ohio? If so, you are sadly mistaken. The truth is that most of them would not move to Ohio. And what you fail to understand is that you cannot just go out and hire new talent like that which is possessed by the DLI faculty. There are simply no other people available anywhere in the United States who able to teach some of the less-commonly-taught languages that are taught at DLI. You can throw all the money you want at this problem, but any attempt to move DLI to Ohio is tantamount to shuttering the doors forever.

The bipartisan 9-11 Commission and General Michael Hayden, the former director of the National Security Agency and currently the deputy director of National Intelligence, both identified the lack of linguistic talent in the Defense Department as the "Achilles heel" in our struggle against terrorism. The fact that you would even consider an action that would lead to closing the *only* school we have that produces the linguists needed to fight the Global War on Terrorism, indicates to me that you are ignorant of the importance of linguists to our nation and foolhardy enough to jeopardize the lives of millions of Americans while we are at war.

Lest you think I am somehow connected with DLI, I am not. I am just a daily witness to the U.S. Government's poorly conceived efforts at bridging the "language gap." We tried moving DLI to San Antonio in the 1980s and it didn't work. Your idea to move it Dayton, Ohio, in the midst of a war is just plain stupid and you all ought to be fired for incompetence for even considering it. I bet that would save money... and lives.

Sincerely,



Ronald Parks