



BRAC Commission

AUG 23 2005

Received

Edward M. Kennedy

U.S. Senator for Massachusetts
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Fax Cover Sheet

DATE: August 23, 2005 TIME: 5:30 pm

TO: The Hon. Anthony J. Principi, Chairman, BRAC

FAX: 703-699-2735

FROM: _____ PHONE: 202.224.4543

FAX: 202.224.2417

RE: Hanscom AFB, AFR/L realignment

CC: _____

Number of pages including cover sheet: 3

Message

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 23, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to express our concerns about the Defense Department's recommendation to realign the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) at Hanscom Air Force Base by relocating the Sensors Directorate to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio and the Space Vehicles Directorate and Geophysics Lab to Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. This proposal is inconsistent with the Department's analysis of Hanscom as a leading science and technology installation and could disrupt key programs under AFRL's mission. Accordingly, we urge the Commission to retain these programs at Hanscom when you finalize the BRAC realignment and closure list.

The success of AFRL, particularly the Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates, depends inherently on its close proximity to the Nation's leading defense technology cluster. Over the years, Hanscom has developed enduring partnerships with surrounding high-tech companies, research labs, and academic institutions, which have furthered the Air Force's efforts to develop and acquire next generation military technology. The presence of an unparalleled high-tech workforce serves as the engine behind the thriving industries and institutions that support the base. It is not surprising that the Milken Institute has ranked the Route 128 Corridor in eastern Massachusetts as the number one region for science and technology in the country.¹ Without access to this critical human capital, we are concerned that AFRL's mission would be significantly undermined.

In addition, the proposed relocation of the Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates carries significant costs with few benefits. An internal poll conducted at AFRL after the release of the Defense Department's 2005 BRAC recommendations found that fewer than 20% of technology professionals would relocate with their divisions or units. New Mexico and Ohio, where these directorates would be realigned, do not have access to large high-tech labor pools capable of fulfilling the new missions. In fact, the Milken Institute's study did not rank either of these states in the top ten for science and technology.

Finally, we are concerned that the Defense Department's recommendation to realign certain AFRL components from Hanscom is inconsistent with its own analysis of the base's military value. According to Air Force data, Hanscom scored highly across key

¹ Milken Institute, "State Technology and Science Index," March 2004

Development and Acquisition areas, including sensors, electronics, and electronic warfare. Specifically, Hanscom ranked 5th out of 103 facilities for sensors and electronics development and acquisition and 10th out of 21 facilities for sensors, electronics, and Electronic Warfare research.

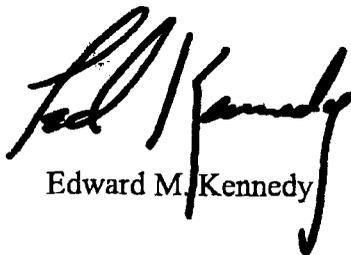
As you know, sensor technology is critical to the success of both the Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates. The Sensors Directorate specializes in target detection, recognition, and identification research and participates in more than 40 sensor programs across the Air Force and intelligence community. The Space Vehicles Directorate conducts research for space situational awareness, including electronic warfare and advanced space sensors for intelligence operations. Given Hanscom's strength in these fields, we believe that moving these directorates away from Hanscom would jeopardize the future of warfighting technology.

The recommendation to close the Geophysics Lab at AFRL also conflicts with prior Air Force analysis. Following an attempt by the Defense Department to transfer the mission away from Hanscom in 1997, the decision was overturned in 2003 with the urging of the Nuclear Threat Monitoring Group within the Air Force Technical Applications Center and with the full support of the Air Force. The Air Force recognized the difficulty of reconstructing the Geophysics Lab's seismic work at another location without compromising its mission.

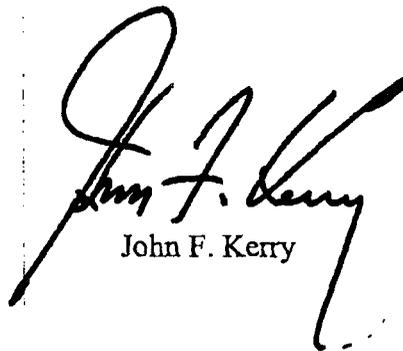
In light of these concerns, we respectfully request that you reconsider the Defense Department's proposal to realign certain AFRL components away from Hanscom. We believe that the cost and difficulty of reconstituting the formidable technological cluster that exists in Massachusetts, as well as the value of the highly skilled workforce currently operating at AFRL, outweigh the benefit of moving these directorates. The recommendation also runs counter to the Air Force's own analysis, which concludes that Hanscom is a strong installation for overseeing the development and acquisition of sensor technology.

Thank you for your service and your attention to our concerns. We appreciate the challenging task confronting you as the Commission makes its final decisions.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy



John F. Kerry