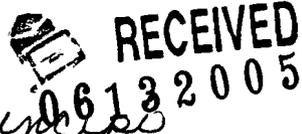


June 10, 2005



The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman of the BRAC Commission,

Dear Sir,

I'm writing in regard to the BRAC Commission's decision to close the Ellsworth Air Base located at Rapid City, South Dakota. I feel very strongly that it is a mistake to locate all of our B-1 bombers at one location in Texas.

The need to have them strategically located through out the United States. Should one enemy guided missile make it through our lines of defense all of those bombers could be destroyed so easily down in Texas.

Please get your Commission to reconsider the closing of Ellsworth Air Force Base in

Rapid City, South Dakota.
It will cost the government
just as much to relocate these
men and build new living
quarters for them and their
families on other bases as
it will to keep Ellsworth
open. Please reconsider
your decision and keep this
vital defense link open.

Sincerely,

Ellen Melius
16336 - 359th ave.
Faulkton, S. D. 57438

00105005

Donald A. Johnson, SMSgt, USAF, Retired
808 Virginia Lane
Rapid City, SD 57701

BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

I'm hoping that none of this information is new to you but still feel a need to state my concerns about closing Ellsworth AFB to the committee.

Firstly, Mr. Rumsfeld has never liked the B-1 and would have liked to retire them all before now due to the expense of maintaining them. Some in the Air Force feel the same way. It can quickly be converted to the long range ALCM role it had originally. This must have made the Russians very nervous because their inspectors, by treaty, checked our current conventional configuration of the B-1s often and thoroughly.

Secondly, there are not many bases with runways built to withstand the constant weight concentrations that heavy bombers' landing gear place upon them during the never-ending landings and take-offs. Dyess' runway lifespan will be reduced by the increased activity. Has the cost of repair/renewal been figured into the cost of the relocation? I know some B-1s will be based at Guam to deter North Korea. The cost of 118 weapons bunkers at Ellsworth has to be considerable too.

Thirdly, it's a short sighted mistake to reconfigure our armed forces for current wars when we will return to nuclear deterrence in a few years when China decides to expand their sphere of influence and more oil. Ellsworth, Minot, Malmstrom, Whiteman and Warren are our only nuclear bases with enough warning time to launch during an SLBM or cruise missile attack.

Fourthly, unless we have some new capabilities I haven't heard of, mobile launchers are impossible to target from unmanned ICBMs/SLBMs. The Chinese have intelligently built an expanding arsenal of road and rail-mobile, reusable, reloadable, cold-launch ICBMs, perfectly suited for nuclear blackmail in a second strike scenario.

Finally, we may be needing the manned bombers again, as in 1986, to go to an Advanced Alert Repositioning Plan ("AARP" with crews aboard ready for take-off) when the Chinese

figure out the Russian built Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS), launched into a southerly polar orbit, is the perfect orbital delivery vehicle for a surprise attack. A booster launched from Hainan (or Taiwan soon) would be assumed to be a scientific, navigational, or a recon satellite (probably labeled "COSCO") launch into LEO. The re-entry vehicles' bus arriving from our south could be guided to several targets concurrently from above the U.S. Do we have space surveillance to the south yet? I don't know. But the fewer targets they have, the less able we will be to respond in kind.

I hope I am crazy for thinking this way, but ask any nuclear alert crew member on duty in 1986. We went to AARP, defcon 2, until the orbited vehicle was identified, sometimes for hours on-board the aircraft. Our only defense would be to get away from the reentry vehicle's target area before detonation and proceed with our Emergency War Orders' targets. The Chinese have bought several of these orbital vehicles (busses) from Russia. Ask the NSA or whoever keeps track of that stuff now. Ask the State Department if China has agreed to any treaties on weapons in space. It won't be long before our aircraft need nuclear hardened avionics again. I hope I'm wrong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Johnson".

Don Johnson, SMSgt, Ret.



06272005

Robert C. Liebman
3943 Doral Dr.
Rapid City, SD 57702

HP: 605-341-6330

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

22 Jun 05

Thank you for granting the voters of South Dakota the opportunity to air our concerns about the proposed closure of Ellsworth AFB. Unable to attend the Rapid City hearing, I listened carefully to the proceedings on the radio. During the Q&A session at the end, one commissioner asked a good question about the need for low-level air combat training. Having long experience with low-level bomber operations, please allow me to attempt to answer this question to the commission's satisfaction.

B-1 low-level ("Terrain Following" or TF) capability is unique in the bomber world. It was the primary strength of this weapons system against strategic, Cold War targets, and more recently, B-1s regularly conducted low level operations in Afghanistan in direct support of ground forces. While the B-1 has a superb record of safety and reliability, rigorous low-level flight training is absolutely critical to safe, effective combat operations in this dangerous regime. Low-level strike is the most demanding mission profile for any combat aircraft, combining the need for avoiding terrain, enemy threats and other aircraft, plus the possibility of bad weather; all while finding and hitting assigned targets.

Tactical advantages of the low-level mission profile include increased accuracy for certain weapons, improved target recognition and a strong ability to evade radar guided threats via "terrain masking".

When operating at low level, any airplane naturally uses more fuel (pounds-per-hour), so the proximity of Powder River MOA to Ellsworth is significant in allowing the B-1 aircrew to spend more of their precious fuel in actual low level training, rather than in transit. The training quality of the Powder River MOA is outstanding, combining vast airspace clear of conflicting routes, very few 'noise sensitive areas' and availability of electronic warfare training assets ('MUTES' sites) on location.

Again, due to the additional stresses and challenges of low-level operations, constant training is imperative to maintain this important bomber capability to hold global targets at risk. The combination of Ellsworth AFB and Powder River MOA offers our bombers unmatched opportunity to conduct this training.

Hopefully these comments will help your commission make a well-informed decision to remove Ellsworth from the BRAC closure list, maintain it as the nation's premier bomber training facility, and add even more flying, Guard and Reserve missions to the base. Thank you for your attention.


ROBERT C. LIEBMAN

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman of the BRAC Commission

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Dear Sir,

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Ellen Melius
16336 - 359th ave.
Faulkton, S. D. 5743.

BRAC Commission

JUL 20 2005

Received

July 15, 2005

BRAC Commission:

One of the basic principles to managing 'risk' in any field is not to put all your eggs in one basket. This applies to finance, farming, investments, etc. etc. and even includes military strategy. To transfer Ellsworth AFB of South Dakota to Texas is an unjustifiable risk, especially for the reason of saving a few dollars of the national debt. As a taxpayer, I would much rather see my taxes used to maintain our military strength. In fact, I would even be willing to pay more taxes to increase our military strength. Let the Congress find another source of savings rather than compromise our national defense.

Sincerely;

Leon Handrick
Janet Handrick

Leon & Janet Handrick of
Austin, Texas