

2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

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CHESTER FRITZ AUDITORIUM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

STATES TESTIFYING:

NORTH DAKOTA AND MINNESOTA

COMMISSIONERS:

DR. PHILIP COYLE, III
THE HONORABLE JAMES BILBRAY
THE HONORABLE SAMUEL K. SKINNER

COMMISSIONER CHAIRING THIS HEARING:

THE HONORABLE JAMES BILBRAY

REGIONAL HEARING OF THE BRAC COMMISSION

GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE

MAYOR BROWN: I'm Michael Brown, the Mayor of Grand Forks, and on behalf of the City of Grand Forks, welcome to all the Grand Forks Air Force Base friends and supporters here with us today. What an awesome show of support.

(Applause.)

MAYOR BROWN: Thank you. I also would like to welcome elected officials and citizens from throughout the region from North Dakota and Minnesota. This Air Force base is a part of each and every one of our communities. The men and women who serve here make us proud every day, and every day we're proud to call them family.

I would also like to welcome everyone from the Fargo area and all around the state. What an impressive demonstration of the solid partnership that we're eager to continue.

Most importantly, I want to personally welcome the Base Realignment and Closure Commissioners. We're pleased they agreed to hold this hearing. Dr. Philip Coyle III was a senior official in the Department of Defense from 1994 to 2001. He is also a member of Governor Schwarzenegger's Council on

Base Support and Retention. Welcome, Commissioner Coyle.

(Applause.)

Mr. James Bilbray is a former Democratic House member from Nevada and was a member of the Armed Services Committee. He also served on the Board of Visitors for both the U.S. Air Force Academy and the U.S. Military Academy. Welcome, Commissioner Bilbray.

(Applause.)

Mr. Samuel K. Skinner was Secretary of Transportation and later Chief of Staff to President George H. W. Bush. As Secretary, he developed many innovative successes including the "Open Skies" policy. Open skies, you'll feel right at home here. Welcome, Commissioner Skinner.

(Applause.)

Gentlemen, you bring a wealth of experience to this process. We're honored you are here with us and have full faith in your abilities. The City of Grand Forks is at your service. This hearing is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the quality of the Grand Forks Air Force Base, our regional community, and the relationship between the two. My father was an Air Force jet mechanic, so I know what

it's like to travel around the world from base to base.

As someone who served as an ICBM Missile launch officer and a doctor at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, I have learned firsthand the reason why so many former Grand Forks Air Force Base personnel have chosen this region as home. We're family.

(Applause.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me give a warm family welcome to Commissioners Philip Coyle, James H. Bilbray and Samuel K. Skinner.

(Applause.)

SENATOR CONRAD: Thank you, Mayor Brown. Again, BRAC Commissioners, welcome to North Dakota. Commissioner Bilbray, Commissioner Coyle, Commissioner Skinner, thank you for coming to North Dakota. We appreciate your excellent questions in pursuit of the truth. We have a saying in North Dakota only the best come north --

(Applause.)

-- and that certainly applies to these three outstanding Commissioners and their very professional staff. Thank you.

(Applause.)

And thank you to all the people of Grand Forks

and Fargo who have come to join us today. The relationships between the Air Force and the Air Guard and our communities are incredibly strong. This show of support is a demonstration of our respect for the men and women of the United States Air Force and of the Air Guard.

Let me turn first to the case for Grand Forks Air Force Base. We are intensely proud of Grand Forks Air Force Base --

MR. COWHIG: I'm sorry, Senator Conrad, if we're going to begin the testimony, we need to administer the oath.

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: By law, in the BRAC legislation all witnesses are sworn, so at this time I would ask our legal counsel to swear the witnesses.

SENATOR CONRAD: We are happy to be sworn.

MR. COWHIG: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would raise your right hands, please? I apologize for interrupting, Senator, but it's a requirement that applies not only to the witnesses here but also to the Secretary of Defense and also all other folks who provide evidence to the Commissioners.

(Witnesses sworn.)

SENATOR CONRAD: We are proud of the Grand Forks Air Force Base, proud of its mission and proud of the performance of the men and women who serve there. We strongly believe it is in the national security interests of the United States to retain Grand Forks Air Force Base. We welcome the assignment of unmanned aerial vehicles. We also believe that there is sound military justification for retaining a core group of KC-135s at Grand Forks.

You have already asked the critical question; why keep Grand Forks Air Force Base open? Remember, just two years ago the Air Force selected Grand Forks to be the first base in the country to receive a full complement of the new tankers. Just two years ago they had a process to determine what was the best base in the entire country to put the new tankers. Their conclusion, Grand Forks Air Force Base.

(Applause.)

We would hope the Commission would ask the Air Force what has changed. We don't believe anything has changed to alter the outcome of that decision. Grand Forks was the right place then to put new tankers; it's the right place now to have this core

tanker base.

Beyond that, we believe there are ten compelling reasons to keep Grand Forks Air Force Base open.

One, the Air Force analysis showed Grand Forks Air Force Base had the highest military value of any Northern tier base for the important and growing UAV mission.

Two, we have unfettered and uncluttered airspace as this photo --

(Applause.)

That is a very popular photo.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Shows all those routes going into Las Vegas.

SENATOR CONRAD: Yeah, there is some heavy travel into Las Vegas.

But I say to the Commissioners I think this photo is revealing. This shows the density of air traffic across the United States, and you can see we are well-positioned to take the UAV mission and any other flying missions because our airspace is completely uncongested. We have absolutely no ground encroachment. As this slide shows, Grand Forks Air Force Base is surrounded by open farmland.

It is ready to expand, to take new missions.

Fourth, there is a strategic requirement for Northern tier bases, and I would direct the attention of the Commissioners to the next slide.

It shows very graphically -- if we can go to the slide showing Northern tier bases in 1958 -- you can see there were 17 major Air Force bases between North Dakota and the Atlantic Ocean. Now let's fast forward to today. They're all gone except for the three in the Dakotas. One of the key reasons we believe the Department of Defense decided it was important to keep Grand Forks open was because of the strategic need for Northern tier bases. You can see Grand Forks is now the only active Air Force installation from Minot to Massachusetts. And if we look at the base in Massachusetts, we know it doesn't have a flying mission. So if we're looking at flying missions, there are no bases from Grand Forks to the Atlantic Ocean.

Five, homeland security depends on Grand Forks Air Force Base. The intelligence bill passed just last year and signed by the President calls for UAV overflights and a network of sensors to strengthen northern border security. The law contemplates a central northern border Air Force base.

Number six, Grand Forks Air Force Base offers the opportunity for joint operations with the foremost Air Guard unit in the country, the Happy Hooligans of Fargo, North Dakota

(Applause.)

I know you understand that it is a point of intense pride here that when our nation's capitol was attacked on September 11th, the first forces to rise in defense of the nation's capitol were the Happy Hooligans of Fargo, North Dakota.

(Applause.)

The Fargo Air Guard is only 80 miles from Grand Forks Air Force Base. They are prepared to contribute personnel to joint operations of UAVs based at Grand Forks. They are also prepared to jointly operate tankers out of Grand Forks.

Number seven, Grand Forks has outstanding facilities. We have over \$327 million in infrastructure over the past decade. I know our neighbors to the south were proud of the 140 million that's been invested there. We're doubly proud of the 327 million --

(Applause.)

-- that has been invested here. Yesterday, you saw firsthand the new runway under construction.

You also had an opportunity to see the four new squad ops centers. Grand Forks has also been the largest recipient of family housing money in the entire United States Air Force, \$131 million since 2003 --

(Applause.)

-- and they are outstanding homes. You also had a chance to see a world-class fitness center, a beautiful new dining hall, a brand-new commissary. Those improvements have helped keep Grand Forks the crown jewel of Air Mobility Command. The crown jewel.

(Applause.)

Number eight, Grand Forks is an ideal location for overseas deployments, as these maps show. Grand Forks and McConnell are the only tanker bases that can efficiently support deployments both to the east and to the west. In almost every case, Grand Forks offers faster trip times than McConnell. We also offer shorter trips to the Middle East than the other bases, and I direct your attention especially to the third slide. That shows that to Iraq the miles from Grand Forks are 6,300. We are closer than any of the other major tanker bases to Baghdad, and we also have the fastest trip times to

Mildenhall, and we're tied for second to Hickam. I think that is critically important to your understanding of the location and the value of the location of the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Frankly, the BRAC analysis shortchanges Grand Forks. Almost 40 percent of the score for tanker bases is made up of just one factor, distance to associated airspace, but as you heard yesterday, that has very little relevance to the operations of Grand Forks Air Force Base. As the base commander told you yesterday, 80 percent of their operations are not attached to associated airspace. Instead, these planes are being deployed, being deployed abroad, and the key metric is how fast we can get to where we're sent, and Grand Forks is right at the top of the list.

(Applause.)

Nine, the performance of the men and women of Grand Forks Air Force Base has been exceptional by any measure. They were the first in the air over Afghanistan, the first to set up a base on the ground, and the first to conduct combat air refueling operations. Grand Forks continues to produce like no other installation. Just three months ago --

(Applause.)

Just three months ago the base won the Spaatz Trophy for the best refueling squadron in Air Mobility Command. The wing has won the Solano Trophy for the best wing in Air Mobility Command, and Grand Forks has twice won the Abilene Trophy for best community support.

Number ten, the University of North Dakota School of Aerospace offers a force multiplier. The Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force have stated that UND "offers unique opportunities to focus on the UAV efforts for the Air Force and other services." You had a special briefing last night on the extraordinary capabilities at UND Aerospace. We're proud of them. No other base can offer that.

To conclude, there are ten compelling reasons that this Commission should keep Grand Forks open. To recap those reasons are, number one, Grand Forks Air Force Base has the top military value for UAVs of the Northern tier bases; number two, unfettered airspace; number three, absolutely no ground encroachment; number four, the strategic requirement for Northern tier bases; number five, homeland security needs; number six, the opportunity for joint operations with Fargo's outstanding Air Guard

unit; number seven, the best facilities in Air Mobility Command; number eight, location; number nine, the outstanding performance of this base that was first on the ground, first in the air and first over enemy territory in Afghanistan; and, ten, a partnership with UND Aerospace.

These are, we believe, compelling reasons to keep Grand Forks operating. The appropriate conclusion of this Commission is to affirm the Air Force's plans for the UAV mission and assign a core group of tankers to Grand Forks.

Now let me turn the floor over to General Ron Fogleman. General Fogleman.

(Applause.)

GENERAL FOGLEMAN: Distinguished members of the Commission, Commission staff, my name is General Ronald R. Fogleman, United States Air Force (Retired). In the course of my military career I have served in three positions that are directly related to my remarks and the business before the Commission. In the late 1980s I was the Director of Air Force Programs, where I was responsible for building force structure and bed-down options to take to the Secretary and Chief for their decisions. From 1992 to 1994 I was the Commander in Chief of

U.S. Transportation Command and Commander of Air Mobility Command. I was the individual responsible for implementing the core tanker base concept. Grand Forks Air Force Base was selected then as one of those core tanker bases, it remains that today, and it should be in the future. As Chief of Staff --

(Applause.)

As Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force I was responsible for organizing, training and equipping and assigning missions to the active force, the Guard, the Reserve and our civilians. And so while I do not fully concur with all the recommendations from the Air Force and DoD on the BRAC, I have discussed it with the Air Force senior leadership, and I think I understand the rationale and the plan.

Gentlemen, I only have seven slides, and what I want to do is first focus on the elements of the rationale; what is it that went into the decision-making process.

Could I have the next slide, please? The key issues facing the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief, the Commander of the Guard Bureau and the Air Force Reserve companion are the following. The

United States Air Force since 1974, since the end of the draft, I think, has set the example on how to use Guard and Reserve forces. Their total force program has been a model for all the other services. In the year 2000, the then Chief of Staff, General Mike Ryan, got together with the Commander of the Air Guard and the Commander of the Air Force Reserve Command and they developed a program called the Future Total Force. This is formally established in a document signed by those commanders and it provides the basis for how we will utilize the Guard and Reserve in the 21st century. It was primarily motivated by our experiences in the Balkan War, and the conclusions have been reinforced by the lessons learned in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and so the Future Total Force is not something that was just invented for the BRAC. It has a long, sustaining history, and it plays a big role in the conclusions related to what happens at Grand Forks and Hector.

The second issue facing the leadership is force recapitalization, or as some call it, modernization. We have many mission areas that we're trying to modernize, and these mission areas, it's extremely important to modernize them or our national security strategy will not work.

Particularly we're looking at C-17s for deployment. We're looking at an F-22 to continue to provide air superiority. We're looking at KC-Xs, this is a tanker force. Because, remember, that the United States Air Force does not only provide tankers for the Air Force, it provides them for the Navy, the Marines, and generally for our allies.

We also have to focus on new and emerging missions, and there's where we get into the UAV mission as it is coming down the road.

Location and capacity. The location and capacity of Grand Forks, I think, has been stressed and beautifully demonstrated in Senator Conrad's presentation. I will mention in my following remarks a couple of specific items.

And finally, the emerging missions. The emerging missions are tied very closely to what's happening with this Future Total Force. We have things like space, command and operations, command and control of forces that are deployed in the field, and as I said before, emerging ever more sophisticated UAV operations. So let me turn now to the Future Total Force as it relates to Grand Forks.

In order for a military installation to be a player in a Future Total Force concept, it's got to

have in its proximity a trained Guard or Reserve cadre of personnel. We have that here at Grand Forks with the operations down at Hector. You have to have a proven capacity to recruit. You will see in subsequent presentations that not only are the folks in Fargo leaders in recruiting, but also retention.

The other thing that you have to have is an ability to accept these emerging missions. Now we talk about UAV operations. The plan for Grand Forks and for Hector is the following. Initially there will be one squadron of Predators, they are designated MQ-1s, and then the follow-on, which is the so-called Predator B, which is an MQ-9. One squadron of 12 of these vehicles will be here. The Air Force has programmed 15 total squadrons. At this time they have earmarked 11 locations for those squadrons. There are four squadrons that are not in any way assigned at this point.

The other thing that will be, the other weapon system that will be stationed here will be the RQ-4 Global Hawk. There are presently over 50 Global Hawk platforms in the five-year defense plan for procurement and they will have to be bedded down, and the decision was made to make the second

bed-down location for Global Hawk at Grand Forks. The first location is Beale Air Force Base, which also has the U2 force. There is no way that we can bed down the entire Global Hawk force at Beale. We need another base. It needs to be a base that's oriented towards Europe, and I will explain that in a moment as I get into some of the UAV operations.

The other thing that is important under this Future Total Force concept is the ability to use guardsmen and reservists in crew augmentation roles for both current and future aircraft, for we are going to have fewer aircraft in the United States Air Force in the future, and to get the full utilization of those aircraft you have to have higher crew ratios. Currently in peacetime we cannot afford to have sufficient numbers of active duty crew members to fully utilize the aircraft that we have, and therefore crew augmentation is a big part of the future plan.

And finally, support of homeland defense operations. Senator Conrad touched on this briefly and Governor Hoeven will discuss it in more detail.

Now I would like to turn to the issue of location and capacity. The advantages of geographical location cannot be overstated whether

you're talking about tankers or particularly when you start to talk about UAV operations. We have this strategic presence here in North Central U.S. It simplifies our deployment operations and particularly for UAVs.

If I could ask you just to briefly go to the next chart and then I will come back to this one. Please go to the next chart. You've seen this chart before.

UAVs, when you put them into our national aerospace system and try to coordinate their movements with the FAA is extraordinarily hard, and there's no way that you can move those systems through those jet ways and that congested airspace in Eastern United States. So what you have by putting them here in Grand Forks is you can see the corridor of the Polar Route that takes you right across the lakes and gets you into Europe. It's a key consideration in the bed-down of UAVs at this location.

Back to the previous chart, please. We have already heard, and will hear more, about the University of North Dakota Aerospace studies program, the abundance of airspace and the ability to create operating locations here. I'm going to

list but not talk about a couple of key attributes of UAVs later in my presentation, and one of the things that I will talk about is persistence; persistence over the battlefield. And so to train in the operation of this you're going to need airspace where we can operate these vehicles in a training environment.

Okay. Next slide. Force recapitalization. We are looking at, out into the future, not only the UAVs that we've identified of Predators and Global Hawks. There's a huge program underway with DARPA, with the Navy, and with the United States Air Force on a family of UAVs called X-45s, X-47s. These are vehicles that will not appear on the ramp within the next five years. They're flying today, they're in test today, but these weapon systems will come.

How many of you knew anything about the B2 bomber before it showed up at Whiteman? Think about Whiteman Air Force Base and how it looked like a waste of ramp space and opportunity for years. We're already talking about unmanned bombers, slightly smaller than a B2, equipped with sensor systems and our own magazines, if you will, that give you the ability, in terms of time of flight, of a single weapon from time you see it until you want

it on the ground. So a future tanker force structure.

We know we have been through, in the United States Air Force, a very difficult time in the tanker procurement process, but there is no doubt about the requirement for a new tanker. Just recently the Commander of Air Mobility Command has had to ground 27 KC-135Es. We have, since the very beginning in the tanker business, had a shortfall in capability. That shortfall is even greater today, and so the rationale behind the Air Force redistribution right now is try to and move these KC-135Rs out of Grand Forks, put them into units where you have the ability to have associate operations, get greater capability out of them there, and then when we get the KC-Xs, have a base that you can put new equipment into and start filling that bath tub.

Also, in my conversations with senior leadership, they point out that we will have a command-and-control aircraft and it is not going to be 707-type platform, so it's not going to be in Georgia with the rivet -- or with the J STARS airplanes, it's not going to be in Omaha with rivet joint; it will bed down wherever the KC-10 beds down

because it'll share the airframe when it occurs.

Now emerging missions, if we could very quickly, we've talked about the UAVs, we've talked about the reachback, we've seen Senator Dorgan's, or we will see Senator Dorgan's slides again on airspace, and so one of the things we need to remember about UAVs is that these operations are not compatible with commercial airport operations, international airports. This is the reason that you're going to have this split operation.

You saw the beautiful lack of encroachment out at Grand Forks, and you will see and hear from a very qualified group of guardsmen who will be able to take on the command-and-control portion of this mission as we go down the road.

Next slide. Just for those people who haven't seen Predators, I just wanted to quickly put up a Predator picture, a Global Hawk picture.

Next slide. If you want to really get out on the limit, that's what the X-45 looks like. It's actually flown and dropped bombs autonomously.

Future unmanned bomber. Talks about where we're going with that. And we talked about homeland defense.

So in conclusion if I could, the summary; the

United States Air Force is not a social action agency, the United States Air Force is not an employment agency. The United States Air Force exists for one reason and one reason alone, and that is to defend the United States of America, and they do that --

(Applause.)

-- they do that by fighting and winning America's wars. The most precious resource that they have are our people. But right after that in resources are installations, locations that enable them to do their job, and listed there are the things that makes Grand Forks Air Force Base vital to the United States Air Force in this country. Thank you.

(Applause.)

SENATOR DORGAN: I'm Senator Byron Dorgan. I want to welcome you to our state and welcome you to the University of North Dakota, my alma mater. You follow, by the way, in the footsteps of some other prominent groups that have come to North Dakota to examine local conditions: Lewis and Clark.

(Laughter and applause.)

I might also mention General George Armstrong

Custer, and let me assure you that he was feeling just fine when he left North Dakota. I'm just thinking maybe you don't want to stop in Montana.

I do want to say this to all of you. We are really pleased you're here, we're so proud of the Grand Forks Air Force Base, and for the next few minutes I want to talk about what makes this Grand Forks Air Force Base so valuable to our country, no matter what missions are performed here, and I will explain why we believe their full value was not reflected in the ratings the Air Force gave to these installations, especially the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

As you consider the future of North Dakota bases, remember this BRAC round is designed to serve for decades, minimum of 20 years. The bases you keep open in this round are the only ones we will have two decades from now, and the bases you close or reduce in this round will not be available for the future, so this is very important. The fact is North Dakota is exactly the kind of place where we are going to have to have our bases located two decades from now as you can see from the map. Why? Because we have the specific characteristics that we need for our military bases. We have them and we'll

still have them 20 years from now, and let me explain.

The needs shown on this screen are precisely what North Dakota offers as a home to Air Force bases. Population density. Well, one of the Department of Defense's priorities is to have air bases in areas with relatively low population density and no encroachment issues that could restrict operations. A fair number of our military bases in the U.S. are now located near major population centers which limit the hours of flight operation because local communities complain about noise and air traffic, and that problem is simply going to get worse.

The bases in North Dakota are near cities that are large enough to provide a good sense of community, but otherwise the upper great plains has some of the lowest population densities, as you can see on the map, and there is simply no encroachment issues here at all.

Now Senator Conrad has already shown you this photo, and I want you to see it again; it's the view you no doubt would have seen in the window of your airplane as you made your approach to Grand Forks. You arrived in Grand Forks by looking out over this

vista, largely farmland surrounding this wonderful Air Force base. Encroachment isn't a problem. You can see it. And it won't be a problem 20 years from now.

It's becoming more and more important that our bases be located in areas where there are no air quality problems, no issues that would restrict operations, and this doesn't get much attention, unfortunately, but Nelson Gibb, who is the Air Force Assistant Secretary for Installations, Environment and Logistics, said this to Congress. He said, "Considerations related to air emissions may supercede readiness as a key driver in basing and operating decisions."

About 85 Air Force installations are now located in areas that do not achieve minimum air quality and do not achieve the standards they're supposed to achieve. That means the Air Force is not going to be able to deploy additional systems at those bases in the future, and that's very important.

Now this map shows that North Dakota has about the cleanest air in the country; air quality attainment is not a problem for our region, and it won't be 20 years from now.

Now Senator Conrad has already shown you this map, I want to show it one more time. Our bases, the Air Force has always said, and Department of Defense says, should be located where there is plenty of uncrowded airspace for training and routine flight operations. This map, in fact, was used in the Air Force BRAC meetings, and it was a big factor in the decision to keep the Grand Forks base open. And as you can see, Grand Forks and Fargo are located in a region of our country with a very low density of commercial air tracks; that means flights are almost never canceled in this region because of air traffic control restrictions.

So you're probably sitting there asking yourself, well, if North Dakota's bases are so perfectly situated, why didn't they get higher scores on the MCI scores? That's a great question. We went to the BRAC confident these bases would score very high. After all, the Pentagon and the Air Force officials repeatedly assured us, and they probably assured you as well, that encroachment and air quality would be major drivers in the BRAC decisions.

In fact, the Grand Forks Air Force Base received perfect scores for air quality attainment,

lack of mission encroachment and lack of air traffic control restrictions. Perfect scores. But instead of playing a major role in the BRAC process, those factors played almost no role in the process. That's unbelievable to me. They counted for only 10.3 out of a possible 100 points for the tanker mission -- if I could have the next slide, please -- they counted for only 10.3 out of a possible 100 points for the tanker mission, and only 9.94 points out of 100 for the fighter mission.

The Air Force's methodology for scoring just didn't give much credit to the kinds of characteristics that make North Dakota's bases exceptional. Encroachment counted for 2.08 percent of tanker bases scores. Think of that. Encroachment, which the Air Force said is just a huge issue, a big concern, 2 percent of a tanker bases scores. Air quality 1.35 percent, air traffic control 6.9 percent. Again it is unbelievable that the major factors they have described are not a part of the significant evaluation. That defies common sense and is at odds with what the Air Force has been saying in the past years.

The fact is the Air Force can't buy lack of encroachment, it can't buy wide-open air spaces, it

can't buy clean air or air quality attainment, and yet the Air Force gave those considerations almost inconsequential concern in their scoring.

Look, the plain fact is this; North Dakota air bases have what the Air Force needs, and we believe we can and we believe we will be a host to important Air Force missions for decades to come. You should know that we welcome the UAV mission at the Grand Forks Air Force Base and we want to continue to host a tanker mission as well. There is no better place for it. And whatever mission is assigned here, you should know something else. You can be sure it will be done better here than anywhere in the world.

(Applause.)

And finally, and finally, you are on a frenetic and breathless pace to finish your work in four months. Timing is everything. An old Cherokee Indian chief once said, "The success of a rain dance depends a lot on timing." Your timing --

(Laughter.)

Your timing today couldn't have been better. You show up here in Grand Forks and see the support for the Grand Forks Air Force Base and see the people who come out to honor America's soldiers, and we say to you that in all of the Air Force, evaluate

all of the bases in all of the Air Force in all of this country, and the Grand Forks Air Force Base is simply the best, simply the best.

(Applause.)

And, Commissioners, as Paul Harvey would say, that is the rest of the story. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

CONGRESSMAN POMEROY: Secretary Skinner, Secretary Coyle, my former colleague, Congressman Bilbray, thank you for your service. Our country is fortunate to have leaders of your high and proven caliber serve as the key decision makers in this critical BRAC round.

Every since the first shovel of dirt was turned on wheat fields west of town commencing the construction of the Grand Forks Air Force Base almost 50 years ago, our community has taken very seriously our responsibility to be the best host community for the United States Air Force that we can possibly be.

(Applause.)

Now there's a new mission for Grand Forks, the unmanned aerial vehicles. As described by General Stephen Wood of the Air Force Plans and Programs, the Air Force is moving rapidly to build UAV

capacity and has determined that Grand Forks Air Force Base has the highest military value for the housing of this mission along the Northern tier.

Why Grand Forks? The old real estate line applies to our base; it's location, location, location. As Secretary Dominguez noted on May 17th of this year, you can't find a better UAV location, and he said that in reference to our Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Location. You have seen that Grand Forks has no encroachment on the ground and abundant restricted airspace for take-offs and landings in the air now and in the future, as Senator Dorgan has just shown. In sunny Grand Forks when we say the skies are clear, we mean they're open and ready for the missions of the U.S. Air Force and always will be.

(Applause.)

Location. Grand Forks is next door to an outstanding Air National Guard unit and adjacent to the largest University-based aerospace and pilot training facility in the country.

(Applause.)

Location. Grand Forks provides strategic presence in the northern United States for both the

tanker and UAV mission. UAV technology will aid border surveillance, providing meaningful benefits for both the Department of Defense and homeland security, and when it comes to tankers, Grand Forks has best supported the U.S. military's need for global reach by maintaining the highest operations temple of any core tanker base.

(Applause.)

But as we have been discussing, unfortunately the realignment recommendation does not accurately reflect Grand Forks' role as the key refueling base in the nation. In fact, almost 40 percent of the U.S. Air Force rating for tanker bases consisted of distance to associated airspace, but that airspace was overwhelmingly domestic training refueling tracks. As this slide shows, such a measurement skews against a base like Grand Forks. The problem with that measurement is that it doesn't reflect reality. Most refueling missions are overseas, not in domestic airspace. Indeed over 80 percent of Air Mobility Command's efforts is focused on the Middle East, which means that the most important refueling efforts are focused on tracks leading there. As Senator Conrad showed, tankers flown from Grand Forks can get there faster and with less fuel than

any core tanker base.

(Applause.)

Now I believe that UAVs plus tankers gives the Grand Forks Air Force Base the potential to provide the maximum benefit to the Air Force. Secretary Rumsfeld has stated that a goal of this BRAC round is to maximize both war fighting capacity and efficiency. Now Grand Forks can deliver a lot of bang for the UAV buck, but the Grand Forks Air Force Base is capable of even greater cost-effective synergies if some aspect of the KC-135 tanker mission remains operative at the base. This dual mission not only maximizes cost-effective use of base infrastructure, it preserves future program options for the Air Force.

The UAV mission requires the very same capacities that presently support the force squadron of KC-135 tankers. The new runway, high def system, presence of crews and support personnel, the housing, the fitness center, and many other aspects of base operations will serve the UAV mission while offering capacity for additional missions at maximum savings and operational efficiencies.

More than \$327 million has been invested in the base over the last decade. It stands superbly

equipped, as you saw yesterday, for continuation of the tanker mission. We believe that the additional personnel required to support a tanker mission is less than a hundred per squadron. We encourage a cost benefit analysis, a COBRA analysis on this point, which we believe will substantiate the cost efficiencies of this joint operation.

Crew augmentation from the Air National Guard means additional efficiencies, and only 80 miles from this Air Force base is our outstanding guard unit you'll hear more about later this morning.

In addition, retention of a tanker mission fully preserves assets that exist at the base for use in technologies and missions that are coming in the years ahead. Mid-air refueling of UAVs, new tankers for the Air Force, these are just around the corner, and the assets of this base can be fully utilized also for expeditionary and training purposes today. It only makes sense to preserve the capacity which has been constructed.

We bought it, let's use it, and keep it in our inventory as an option for our cost effectively meeting Air Force needs. In North Dakota when we say UAV, we don't just mean unmanned aerial vehicles, we mean use all the value.

(Applause.)

To us it only makes sense to use what we built in terms of state-of-the-art infrastructure at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, thereby preserving its availability for cost-effective future assignments.

You know, I saw a sign as we walked in that really said it all. "Tankers plus UAV rock."

(Applause.)

We're proud, we're proud that our location and experience has been recognized for a UAV mission, we believe there were very substantial reasons for that decision, but we also believe that the continuation of the tanker mission captures a broader use of this top-notch installation and will maximize the contribution of this Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Now to continue this case, North Dakota's Governor John Hoeven.

(Applause.)

GOVERNOR HOEVEN: Commissioners, Commissioners, welcome. I'm John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, and it's been great to spend some time with you. Thank you for being with us. We are proud of Grand Forks Air Force Base. Grand Forks Air Force Base and the airmen assigned are not just tenants to the citizens and elected officials of

North Dakota. We are partners at every corner and we work together to support national and local defense issues. One example of our support is a veteran's bonus legislation passed this year which appropriated \$5 million of state funds to provide every active duty, National Guard and Reserve North Dakota resident veteran with \$100 for every month of deployment in the theatre of military operations.

(Applause.)

It was just one of the ways we said thank you to our troops. I would also like to note that many of our airmen assigned to Grand Forks ultimately retire in North Dakota.

(Applause.)

You met the mayor. Mayor Mike Brown, and actually my wife Mikey, are good examples. A primary reason is our strong community support of the military. They're part of us, they're part of our family.

One of the issues we're currently working on is the creation of a Joint National Training Center in North Dakota. This air and land space initiative has been extensively briefed and has the strong support of not only North Dakota but also at the highest levels of the Air Force. These individuals

recognize the clear advantage to using our diverse terrain, infrastructure and climate to train real-world scenarios. This concept would transform the entire state, some 70,000 square miles, into the largest air and special forces training area in the entire world. North Dakota is an ideal setting for this training area due to diversity of terrain, four distinct weather seasons, bases in the state that are well-suited for exercises, and virtually no air traffic congestion.

This initiative represents a three-year concerted effort that, in addition to multiple briefings of senior general officers, includes working with the affected civilian airlines to address issues in advance. These issues have already been addressed and we have agreements in place with the airlines. I provided you with a copy of our presentation, and I strongly urge you to take a look at that presentation. It demonstrates the military value of North Dakota.

While other regions' access to airspace is diminishing, the Joint National Training Center initiative puts Grand Forks Air Force Base on an upward trend. Of all Northern tier bases, Grand Forks offers the greatest potential for cooperation

between active duty and National Guard forces. I would like to repeat that. Of all Northern tier bases, Grand Forks offers the greatest potential for cooperation between active duty and National Guard forces.

As stated in the background paper on Realignment of Grand Forks Air Force Base dated June 3rd, 2005, the designation of the Predator and the Global Hawk initiative allows, quote, "the opportunity to take advantage of Future Total Force integration initiatives to capture highly skilled Airmen for emerging mission requirements." As Commander in Chief of the North Dakota National Guard, I am pleased to welcome joint operations between the National Guard and the Air Force.

Grand Forks Air Force Base also offers the military access to the premier aerospace facility in the country, the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences at the University of North Dakota.

(Applause.)

I think some of you may have even taken a turn in the simulator last night. UND has already partnered with the Army to train West Point helicopter pilots and with NASA to operate the DC-8 research jet also known as "The Flying Lab." The

aerospace school will be an outstanding partner with the Air Force in creating a UAV Center of Excellence in Grand Forks.

Finally, Grand Forks is absolutely the right location for the UAV mission to support homeland security. The Grand Forks Border Patrol Station has responsibility for over 900 miles of border from the Great Lakes through most of Montana, the longest border section on the Northern tier. The National Guard, in cooperation with the Air Force, the Border Patrol and law enforcement, will prevent problems with Posse Comitatus and secure the northern border to keep our nation safe.

We believe the Department of Defense recommendation to retain Grand Forks Air Force Base was a correct decision based on military value, but we also believe the military value analysis was flawed. It doesn't give proper weight to significant sections of the eight specified BRAC criteria as we've identified.

To eliminate all of the tankers as recommended would create a vacuum in the entire north central part of the country. I would note that one of Canada's fears is that a terrorist attack on the United States could come through Canada. In

addition, keeping a flying mission at Grand Forks would only serve to enhance the UAV mission, and our Air Guard can provide the support for cooperation and crew augmentation with the Air Force for the tanker mission.

The bottom line is just this. North Dakota presents a unique opportunity for military value not available anywhere else in the United States. Grand Forks Air Force Base is vital, vital in capturing that value and vital for our military. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

Our next presenter is Mayor Lynn Strauss. We are very pleased to have him with us here today in Grand Forks. Mayor.

(Applause.)

MAYOR STRAUSS: As Mayor of East Grand Forks, Minnesota, I would like to thank the BRAC Commissioners for conducting the field hearing in Grand Forks. The reason that two Minnesota senators and I are testifying is because the Grand Forks Air Force Base has enormous impact on not only North Dakota but also much of northwestern Minnesota.

The Grand Cities in this region are a great place for the Grand Forks Air Force Base. There is

very little commercial air traffic and no encroachment with land surrounding the base. The open skies and the land offer unlimited possibilities for expansion for Air Force missions. These great operational advantages come at a reasonable price; the Grand Cities in this region have a low cost of living, especially when it comes to apartment rental and affordable housing and well-constructed new homes.

Last month I was in Washington, D.C., and I feel we are fortunate in this area and our base that we do not have the traffic jams that they deal with on a daily basis. Our time is precious and is better spent with our families than in a traffic jam, and for our Air Force people. We are --

(Applause.)

We are pleased to have an extremely low crime rate in this area. You can take your family and travel in a 60-mile radius and never worry about being in a wrong area. Not so at some of the larger bases, where you have to not only watch where you're going but what time you go. Our airmen should not need to worry about that kind of problem.

We have a tremendous health service environment. J.D. Power and Associates recently

recognized Altru Health System in Grand Forks with an outstanding patient experience award. Last week I met a young --

(Applause.)

Last week I met a young high school junior working at a local restaurant. She told me that her mother and dad were in the Air Force and would be reassigned if the base closed or was realigned. She said that she was going to stay in Grand Forks to finish high school even if her parents moved because of the excellent educational opportunities. Our K through 12 schools are second to none, and every student has an equal opportunity to excel, grow and mature. Unlike some communities, we treat military students just like everyone else. There are no second-class kids in our Grand Cities.

(Applause.)

We also have the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks -- known as the Harvard of Aviation -- the Northland Community and Technical College in East Grand Forks, as well as the University of Minnesota in Crookston.

This region offers a quality of life that is superior to that in other areas where Air Force bases are located. Good schools, medical care,

affordable housing, education, and if you enjoy the outdoor activities, great deer hunting, duck hunting and fishing are all within an hour of the base. If you enjoy sports you can enjoy watching the best college hockey teams in the nation --

(Applause.)

-- at the finest, and I repeat, at the finest college hockey arena in the country. We also have great football, basketball and baseball teams, along with many other sports. For camping, families in this region have three state parks within one hour of the air base. There are many golf courses to choose from in the surrounding area for golfers of any age. The winter offers snowmobiling and cross-country skiing on many miles of groomed trails. This region offers something for everyone.

After the '97 flood, the Corps of Engineers and FEMA credited the "can do" attitude and the resilience of our people for the quick recovery of our communities. Some of them even said we should be used nationwide as the poster child example of how to recover from a flood. We still have some work to do --

(Applause.)

-- and you'll hear about that later, but Grand

Forks Air Force Base and the surrounding communities have worked together to win the Abilene Trophy award twice, demonstrating cooperation and support between communities and Air Force base. Today is an example of our support for the retention and hopefully the expansion of our Grand Forks Air Force Base.

(Applause.)

The next from the state of Minnesota, Senator Coleman.

(Applause.)

SENATOR COLEMAN: Let me first say thank you for being here, thank you for seeing firsthand the excellence of what the Grand Forks Air Force Base has to offer. I'm just going to make three points.

First, I do want to note that we are all deeply concerned with the economic impact on both sides of the Red River if the Air Force realigns away from Grand Forks and Fargo and jobs are lost in this region, but what I want to tell us is why it is in the Air Force interests and national security interests to continue to have a strong Air Force presence in this part of the country.

Point number one, training military personnel in this climate creates superior personnel to do the

difficult missions of the Air Force. Comfort, sunshine and sea breezes may make for a good vacation spot, but when our people are asked to face the harsh climates around the world, like the 15-degree-below weather it can reach in Afghanistan, overcoming and thriving in these challenging conditions is a big plus. That's why a local boy from down the road named Roger Maris didn't need steroids to hit a home run record.

(Applause.)

Point number two, as was said before, we're the short route to the Middle East. Our geographical common sense is sometimes wrong. Most people don't know the closest U.S. air hub to Beijing is not LA or Seattle, it's Minneapolis-St. Paul. The great circle route to Afghanistan or Iraq is the shortcut. If you're thinking about realigning and flying more missions to places like Little Rock or Elgin Air Force Base in Florida, that means a 7 or 800-mile longer flight, and I don't need to remind you how much 800 miles of extra fuel costs these days, not to mention putting that many more hours on our pilots and aircraft.

Point number three, the success of our defense efforts depends on people. We can have all the high

tech equipment in the world and the most intricate strategies, but without qualified, motivated and ready people in sufficient numbers, none of it is going to make a bit of difference. One thing we are justly proud of in this part of the country is the way our folks volunteer for active duty, the Guard and the Reserves. The Minnesota Army National Guard leads the nation in recruitment and retention. The North Dakota Guard has a 98 percent retention rate. We're doing more than our fair share, and that has everything to do with the strong support of these communities. In these tough times it would be unwise to turn our backs on this source of some of our nation's best fighting men and women. I worry that so much --

(Applause.)

I worry that so much of the realignment is pushing our military capacity south of the Mason-Dixon line and that we will lose the quality of folks that this region produces, as well as undermine the broad national support for our military's mission being generated by the citizen soldiers and those working in the Air Force base in this region. I urge you not to be penny wise and pound foolish. While --

(Applause.)

-- while you have been charged with finding certain savings, you should do so in a way that leaves us with the highest level of security when you are done. Because of the unique characteristics of this region, our geographical proximity to the Middle East, and the caliber of our people, I hope you will support the maximum presence of the Air Force in Grand Forks and Fargo. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Minnesota Senator Mark Dayton.

(Applause.)

SENATOR DAYTON: Thank you very much. Thank you, Commissioners. Last time I was applauded in North Dakota was 41 years ago as a Minnesota hockey goalie.

(Laughter.)

Unfortunately playing in Grand Forks, they applauded when I let the shots in, not when I stopped them.

(Laughter.)

We in Minnesota, being the neighbor to the east, are very proud also of the Grand Forks Air Force Base, and we contribute as our citizens, as employees, as Americans together on behalf of its

excellence, and we rely as part of the region on those 4,000 jobs, the \$380 million in annual wages, benefits, expenditures, taxes and charitable contributions. Those economic, social and human benefits are, as was said before, are priceless in North Dakota and Minnesota, and conversely their loss would be just as catastrophic.

The Department of Defense estimates that its proposal would cost this region 2,200 of the 2,900 active-duty military personnel currently at the Air Force Base, and almost 5,000 total jobs. That would be 7 1/2 percent of all the jobs in this economic area. That percentage of job loss would be equal to eliminating all of the federal government in Washington, in the D.C. area, which would actually be a more popular proposal.

(Applause.)

Most of the Air Force base's annual \$380 million of direct economic contribution to this area would also be lost. Severe as those numbers are, they understate the devastation that the Pentagon's proposal would inflict on this region's people and everything that they have here. I served twice as the head of the Minnesota Department of Economic Development in the 1970s and 1980s, and one term as

state auditor in the 1990s auditing local governments, and I have seen cities' largest employers shut down, causing hundreds, even thousands of people to lose their jobs. The devastating effects on those good men and women, their families, the communities, schools, churches, go far beyond even the numbers.

In this instance, the men and women here, Minnesotans and North Dakotans, are good, honest, hard-working, and at the Grand Forks Air Force Base especially, patriotic Americans. They've done everything that they've been asked to do. They've given their best to protect the country, they've done it extremely well, and they don't deserve to lose their jobs, their livelihood and their mission through no fault or choice of their own.

Anywhere in this country if the largest employer leaves will be hit hard by that loss and face the hard road to recovery. But it's even harder in a region like this with longer transportation routes, higher energy costs, harsher weather conditions and other adverse factors that all together make replacing 5,000 lost jobs extremely difficult, and that's exactly why the particular Minnesotans and North Dakotans who live

and work here have done in the past and will continue to do all that is necessary for this Air Force base to succeed, to change in the times but to continue to excel. Because if North Dakota and Minnesota did not have the best, most productive, well-educated and highly motivated people in the country and the world -- and I say that not out of a sense of provincial pride but because the state-by-state educational achievement records support it time after time, the two best achievement states educationally in the country, right here -- if they didn't work here, there wouldn't be the base or much else here that would be successful.

But fortunately they are here, men and women who are asking not what their country can do for them but rather what they can continue to do for their country, asking that they can continue to make the Grand Forks Air Force Base as essential to our national security as it has been in the past and as outstanding in its national service as it can be and should be for many years to come.

(Applause.)

It's my pleasure to introduce the Grand Forks City Council President Hal Gershman.

(Applause.)

CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT GERSHMAN: Good morning and, welcome, Commissioners Coyle, Bilbray and Skinner, to Grand Forks, one of America's best small cities. I appreciate this opportunity to testify today about the economic impact if the Grand Forks Air Force Base were to close, but first I believe a quick look back will put a frame around my presentation.

In 1966 the 321st Missile Wing became operational at Grand Forks Air Force Base. This was the year of the cold war and our adversaries had targeted their missiles at us. Not surprisingly, we targeted our missiles at them. In other words, we lived at ground zero. Our city and region never winced, never whined, never flinched. It was our way of demonstrating our intense patriotism and support for the men and women in uniform and their families.

In the 1995 BRAC round, we lost the 321st Missile Wing. According to government figures, that created a loss of 2,100 jobs. As that wing was being drawn down, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks then suffered the 1997 flood and fire, which many have said, including FEMA, was the largest per-capita loss due to natural causes in America's

history, close to \$2 billion. We lost over 1,250 homes, we lost an estimated 7,200 people, or 12 percent of our population. Those losses, compounded by the loss of the missile wing, have been incredibly difficult for our communities to absorb.

Many of our residents spent their entire life savings replacing property and repairing damage. Thousands of our citizens had to go back into debt to finance repairs to their homes and replace personal property. Those who lost their homes had to buy newer, more expensive homes because almost all of our affordable housing stock was lost to the flood. Basically thousands of our citizens had to start over.

Currently we are building a \$405 million flood protection project. Our city's tax burden alone is \$93 million plus interest. Now while our citizens are resilient and very dignified about their financial pressures, every community has a tipping point.

We are all familiar with the perfect storm that devastated much of the East Coast in 1991. It occurred because of the confluence of three major storms coming together in one place. In our case, the loss of the missile wing in 1995 was our first

storm. The flood and fire of 1997 was our second storm. If Grand Forks Air Force Base were to close, the Air Force estimates the loss of more than 5,500 jobs and the loss of \$380 million annually to our economy. That certainly would set the stage for a perfect economic storm for our cities and rural communities. We could easily slip into a downward spiral of economic collapse.

However, the realignment of the Grand Forks Air Force Base with the UAV mission has us excited. Keeping a part of the tanker fleet as well would be icing on the cake.

So as we stood at ground zero for our nation during the cold war era, we are now ready and anxious, ready to stand up again in old ways and new for our nation and for our Air Force.

And now I would like to introduce our great friend and a great patriot, John Marshall. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MARSHALL: Greetings. I'm John Marshall. I'm an American. I'm a flag waver for the support of my friends and family at Grand Forks Air Force Base.

(Applause.)

You've all been welcomed but we forgot one thing. That's not like us. We thank your families also for the sacrifices that they're making while you're doing an American patriotic duty. I realize --

(Applause.)

We realize the sacrifice that your families are making, as we realize the sacrifices that our military friends are making when they're gone 200 days a year in support of this great country.

It's a good day to be a flag waver. How can you not drive down that highway yesterday, how can you not get up this morning and go out, or go in here and see all these flags, how can you not be an American and be proud and be happy and thankful that we live in this great country. Sometimes we forget. We forget to say thank you. When you leave here, remember that this community respects those who give to and serve their country. You people are doing it, and thank you.

(Applause.)

Yesterday was sort of like a Norman Rockwell painting when you saw all that, and again this morning. Okay, I saw one of the commissioners up there when he bent over and picked up that little

flag from that girl. How can you not turn around and be proud to be an American, because in these two days you've been seeing what America is all about. As you drive down those streets today, and as you look out across here, we're all proud to be Americans.

But we're very conscious here in Grand Forks. Why did I end up being the fellow following all these senators and governors and generals and everything? Every community that you go to, they're going to have somebody that stands up and says what their base means to them. Well, they didn't really pick me and tell me to turn around and stand up here today, and I apologize because I didn't write that statement that's in the book. I write like a doctor and nobody could have read it anyway and it wouldn't have been my words. Couldn't do it. My secretary did it. He swore us under oath so I've got to confess right up here in front of everybody.

(Laughter.)

You think I'm taking a test. Huh-uh. She did it. Because in all honesty, I can look out in that crowd and there would be 20 people or maybe more that will stand up here and say the same thing that I'm going to tell you. I wasn't picked for today.

23 years ago I was picked. They asked me then if I would stand up every chance that I got and on behalf of our community and on behalf of this region turn around and say thank you. Thank you.

I can't tell you how many bases, communities over these 20-some years that I've gone around, and I make sure to stand up whether I'm asked or not, and I've driven an awful lot of -- a lot of you know Mike Lowe, and one time I walked right up on the stage, wasn't invited, went up and took the microphone, and I thought he was going to have an absolute coronary. And he said, "What the devil are you doing here?" And I said, "I'm going to say thank you, because my community asked me to say thank you," and I did it. We became good friends.

One of the ways I met General Fogleman was the same way. We've been the best of friends, he still lets me stand up.

But I represent this community. It's not me speaking. I want you to understand that's the way we all feel. I stood here ten years ago for the last BRAC hearing and I told the BRAC Commission back then, there was 10, 11-year-old girl that called and she said, Mr. Marshall, can I get up and testify or can I go talk to those commissioners?

And I said I'm not in charge of that, but I really wish you could. Because if you heard that little voice, she's who you would want to hear from. So I said, well, you tell me and I'll tell the commissioners. So she turned around and she said, Mr. Marshall, I got to tell you, my father is a sergeant out here at the base, my mom works here, our family is happy here, we're treated as equals. My parents are really happy here, we don't have any drugs in the school, we don't have any problems like that. And she said we're just treated so well, we're glad to be here. So I told the commissioners.

Never heard from her again until two weeks ago, and she called and she said, Mr. Marshall, I haven't talked to you in a long time. And I forgot the voice and I forgot the name. And she said I was that little girl that called a long time ago, and this time, she said, I read in the paper that your friends from BRAC are coming again. Well --

(Laughter.)

I didn't say it. She said her family moved from Grand Forks, went to three other bases, we were never treated the same, we never felt the same, my parents were never happy. So when I got the opportunity, I came back. I'm a sophomore at the

University of North Dakota, I feel at home again, I feel amongst friends. That's what we're trying to do here.

So what you see in these two-day capsules of what this community feels about that base, it's not two days. We wouldn't have got the Abilene Trophy, because that takes, as you well know, years and months to get it.

Yesterday when you got off the bus out there, there was a family of three standing behind the big sign -- I had to borrow my friend's glasses -- she wrote me a letter here a few months ago. "My husband was transferred from Edwards Air Force Base to Grand Forks in June 2001 after we requested orders to Grand Forks. In the fall of 2000 I saw a program on television about the flood of '97, and after that program there was no doubt that Grand Forks was the place we wanted to be. The deep community love you showed for this great community made a lasting impression on me. I enjoy my life in this community as an employee at Altru, the mother of a wonderful daughter who is a sixth-grader at Sacred Hearts, sings in the Grand Cities choir, and the proud wife of a member of the United States Air Force. Respectfully, Katrina Kanow" (ph).

They were standing there yesterday as you all got off that bus and she had a big sign and it said, "Welcome to my town, to our town."

I'm well-qualified to turn around and tell you what I'm going to tell you. They've always been our friends out there but in '97 when that flood hit us, things changed. They really changed. When that siren went off that night and our river had gone from a hundred feet to 22 miles wide, and where you ate the other night, that was all under water, ten foot of water, our whole town was, and when those sirens went off that night and we had to leave our homes and everything that we had and we had collected for years, we had to leave, you know what that feels like? Worst disaster the country has ever had. You know what our savior was? Grand Forks Air Force Base.

(Applause.)

When you look in your rearview mirror and you don't think you're ever going to see your home again, you know what that feels like? Not very damn good, I'll tell you. A lot of us went to our second home just west of town. I stood out there with the general that night when he got the telephone call from our mayor. She said there's going to be about

1,200 people coming. 4,500 showed up that night. They were our friends before but they put their arms around us and they held us. And when we cried, they cried. And when we finally laughed, they laughed with us.

If any of you have gone through one of those experiences, it's -- we wouldn't wish it on anybody. I hope you, if you ever have to go through it, have friends that will open their arms and hold you and hug you when you need it, and stick by you through all of it. That week is when things started changing. We couldn't get back in our homes for months. A lot of us lived out at that base for a month or six weeks. They never complained. They never complained.

If you have an experience like that, you pay back your friends and you pay back your family. We will never stop thanking our friends at that base. Because they're family and they're --

(Applause.)

I don't read stop signs very well, so I --

(Laughter.)

God bless you. But most of all, God bless the people who give us the greatest gift of all. God bless our friends in the military and those at Grand

Forks Air Force Base. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: There will be a five-minute break.

SENATOR CONRAD: We are certainly prepared to take any questions at this time, or if you would prefer, we can go directly to the testimony of the community of Fargo.

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: We're going to take a break.

SENATOR CONRAD: All right. We will stand in recess for five minutes and then we will proceed with the testimony of Fargo.

(Break taken from 9:58 to 10:04 a.m.)

CERTIFIED

REGIONAL HEARING OF THE BRAC COMMISSION

FARGO'S HECTOR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIR GUARD STATION

MR. WALSTAD: Good morning, members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Thank you for taking the time to be with us today. My name is Dick Walstad, and I am proud to be serving as Chairman of the Fargo Moorhead Air National Guard Support Group, a committee of government and civic leaders who have joined together to preserve this national treasure that we have come to know as the Happy Hooligans. I've had the pleasure of working with the North Dakota Air National Guard as a volunteer for 30 years of their 58-year history. I have been with them as they were presented numerous times with the highest awards in the land. I have been with them as they served their country throughout the world. I have watched them display their skills in competition, and as a businessman I have been envious of the dedication, spirit and pride that this devoted group of men and women possess. In the minutes that follow you will hear the story of a star-studded history that is filled with awards and recognition; a history of flying safety that is a world record and still climbing; a history that is full of innovation and leadership; a

history that has raised the bar for everyone; a history that is unique to the North Dakota Air National Guard Happy Hooligans. Whether it was flying a human heart across the country or scrambling to defend our nation's capitol, the Happy Hooligans have proved once again they can rise to the occasion.

We will show you the tremendous military value of the unit and its facilities, how it provides the ten core competencies and capabilities that are recognized by the National Guard Bureau, invited to every state, and how the 119th is not only cost-effective, it is perhaps the most efficient of all flying units because of the savings that are realized from their unequaled safety record.

And now I am pleased to introduce the Governor of North Dakota, John Hoeven, who will tell you about our state and the Fargo, North Dakota/Moorhead, Minnesota metro area, the place that is home to the North Dakota Air National Guard Happy Hooligans, the team that you will hear referred to as "The Best Flying Unit on Planet Earth."

(Applause.)

GOVERNOR HOEVEN: Commissioners Skinner,

Bilbray and Coyle, I want to welcome you to North Dakota. We are truly pleased to have you here and we are very appreciative of the time and diligence you're taking as part of this very important BRAC process, and it is my great pleasure to stand in front of you today for the second part of our presentation on behalf of the North Dakota Air National Guard, an outstanding unit, the Happy Hooligans.

(Applause.)

We North Dakotans take great pride in our military, and have the highest per-capita military background of any state. I stand before you representing all of our great citizens who consistently demonstrate their commitment and support to our country through service in the military. Whether it's the Hooligans flying over the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, or the soldiers and airmen deployed since that date, we demonstrate daily our dedication.

We believe that the Department of Defense recommendation to leave open both Hector and the Grand Forks Air Force Base was a correct decision based on military value, but we also believe the military value analysis for both installations was

flawed. It doesn't give proper weight to significant sections of the eight specified BRAC criteria.

Specifically, with regard to the recommendation to realign Hector International Airport, we request that you remove Hector from the realignment list. The simple fact is the retirement of the F-16s was a programmatic change already in place. The Block 15 A Model F-16s at Hector are going away regardless of the BRAC process. The justification presented, that Hector ranked low in military value and that the aircraft should retire "without a flying mission backfill" has already proven incorrect with the designation of a UAV squadron. The language "without a flying mission backfill" at a minimum must be removed from the report because it creates the inference that a flying mission at Hector may be prohibited by BRAC. At the same time we welcome the unmanned aerial vehicle, UAV, mission to North Dakota.

As the Department of Defense recognizes, North Dakota offers an opportunity unique among all 50 states for both ground and airspace training and capacity. We offer the diversity of terrain, the largest available airspace in the nation, diversity

of climate, and the strong support of our citizens.

The identified Predator and Global Hawk missions at Fargo and Grand Forks recognized the high military value of those bases and also demonstrate how we can work together in a joint mission capability. The combination of both Title 32 and Title 10 airmen provides the state and nation with greater flexibility to meet our immediate needs. As Commander in Chief of our National Guard, I have very specific concerns with how the Air Guard concerns are being addressed through BRAC. A strong Army and Air National Guard is crucial to our ability to respond to both local and national events.

On September 11th, 2001, the Hooligans were providing air security over the Pentagon in our nation's capitol, and at the same time, when the airport simultaneously needed security in our state, within five hours we had Air Guard personnel in place providing security to those airports.

As a centrally located border state, North Dakota has very particular needs in the area of homeland defense, which is the primary stated goal of the national defense plan. Required National Guard assets include medics, security police, civil

engineers, firemen, aviation assets, CST team, communications network, and transportation. To meet the homeland security needs of our state, we must have a flying mission. That flying mission will also support and enhance the UAV mission. This approach is also vitally important for recruitment. The current Air Force plan to eliminate flying missions totally in some states is shortsighted at best and does not follow the required eight BRAC criteria.

As we move forward in our fight against terrorism and continue to fight in overseas missions, recruiting and retention has to be our primary concern. We have demonstrated that we can fill all of the necessary positions. North Dakota is one of the few states that is meeting its National Guard recruiting and retention goals. The very first BRAC principle is to "recruit and train." According to the Secretary's report to the BRAC Commission, and I quote, "The department must attract, develop and retain active, reserve, civilian and contractor personnel who are highly skilled and educated and have access to effective, diverse and sustainable training space." North Dakota has proven that we have the ability to

attract and retain the key talent that is needed,
and their performance is absolutely tremendous.

The Department also has a stated goal to work
with the private sector to establish research,
development and testing capabilities. As stated
before, the School of Aerospace Sciences at the
University of North Dakota in Grand Forks will be an
outstanding partner with the Air Force and the Air
National Guard in the development of a UAV Center of
Excellence. Also, since 2003, North Dakota State
University at Fargo has been using UAV simulators
for research and development to enhance UAV
operation and teamwork. Both universities will
greatly enhance and support the UAV mission operated
by the Air Force and our Air Guard in North Dakota.

All of these facts clearly demonstrate that
North Dakota presents unique opportunities for
military value not available anywhere else in the
United States.

Again, we thank you for coming, we thank you
for your consideration, and know that in North
Dakota we appreciate you very much and we support
our military. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Now I would like to call on Senator Byron

Dorgan for his remarks. Senator?

(Applause.)

SENATOR DORGAN: Members of the Commission, Governor Hoeven has just told you that the Happy Hooligans of the 119th Fighter Wing welcome and embrace the UAV mission. Permit me just for a moment a personal observation about the Happy Hooligans. I was a very young boy, just knee-high, standing by our house in a town of 300 people in southwestern North Dakota when I first saw a Happy Hooligan. It was a man named Pappy Larson who flew his jet fighter to my hometown, put it into a steep dive aimed right at the center of a town of 300 people, and then hit the afterburner and pulled straight up into the sky. His sister in the yard next to ours was standing out there waving her apron at her brother, and he was waving his wings as he climbed into the blue morning sky. I'm sure that he stretched a few regulations that morning.

(Laughter.)

I can tell you that he rattled everything in Regent, North Dakota, and he left a young boy with eyes the size of dinner plates. It was nearly 50 years later, on the morning of September 11th, 2001, that I stood on the lawn of the United States

Capitol and, shocked by the terrorist attacks against our country that morning, I looked up into the bright blue morning sky to see the F-16s and, yes, it was the Happy Hooligans flying Air Force cover over our nation's capitol. Pride is a word that falls far short of how I felt then and how I feel now about this unit called the Happy Hooligans.

The point is this Guard unit, our Guard unit, the Happy Hooligans, are something quite unique in all of America. This is not some ordinary Air National Guard unit. I want you to remember that. I wish you had been able to visit the 119th in Fargo. Many of the Happy Hooligans are folks who farm, they run drugstores, they teach school, they do all kinds of things in their community, but they're also members of an Air Guard unit that maintains and flies the F-16 jet fighter planes. More than that, they rank with the best fighter pilots in the world. Everywhere you go people are going to tell you our unit is the finest, our Air Guard unit is the best.

Just ask the question; have you won three William Tell competitions and two Hughes Trophies, and no one in this country will be able to say yes. The USA Today newspaper has called the Happy

Hooligans the godfather of air superiority. It said of them, "When you strap one of these senior flyers into the cockpit of an F-16 Fighting Falcon, the younger boys get out of the way because these are the best air-to-air combat fighters in the world." The Happy Hooligans have flown in contests against the world's top combat pilots, they've brought the trophies home to Fargo, North Dakota as proof that they're the best. No other Guard unit -- I emphasize -- no other Guard unit can match that record. Let me describe --

(Applause.)

Let me describe the William Tell competition. It's the U.S. Air Force's foremost air-to-air competition in which both pilots and ground crews go head-to-head in simulated combat. It's the Super Bowl of air superiority. F-16 units, by the way, aren't supposed to win it; F-15 teams from active-duty Air Force wings are supposed to win it. They have larger pools of aircraft, larger pools of pilots and maintenance personnel from which to select the finest to compete, and the F-15's larger radar is much more powerful than the F-16. Eagle drivers can see and track their targets long before the F-16 Falcon pilots know what's there, but

somebody forgot to tell these Happy Hooligans about that. They've won the competition three times and won it with the oldest aircraft.

(Applause.)

The Happy Hooligans have also won the Hughes Trophy twice. That award recognizes the outstanding air-to-air unit in the country. It's dominated by F-15s as well. The 119th is the only F-16 unit ever to win it, and it's the 119th from Fargo, North Dakota that did it.

Now alongside their flying record, let me just remind you that the Happy Hooligans also have an unmatched safety record. Since 1973 they've flown 140,000 hours in 101s, F-4s, F-16s without a single major accident. That is the longest continuous period of safe fighter aircraft operations for any Air National Guard unit, and one of the best safety records in the entire history of the Air Force.

(Applause.)

This Air Guard unit truly has a rich history, and I think if you were to trust your fate to one group of flyers in all of the world, you would travel to Fargo, North Dakota to find them. I can't believe the Air Force would want to take fighters away from America's best flyers. The Air Force BRAC

recommendations also say in addition to UAVs for the Happy Hooligans, that the Hector Air Guard Station should be prohibited from receiving a flying mission backfill. A carpenter, I think, would call that about a half a bubble off plumb. You don't take planes away from America's best pilots.

(Applause.)

I hope you'll take a hard look at this time and I hope you'll decide to change those recommendations. So I hope that you will change the recommendation and allow the option open for the Air Force to put a manned flying mission into Fargo. This is a 20-year plan. I don't think anyone would seriously want to prohibit our best pilots from having airplanes for two decades. That prohibition must be changed, and I hope you will do that.

As for the UAV mission, finally you should know that the Hooligans are anxious to perform that mission with the same enthusiasm, the same professionalism as they have always exhibited in performing every mission. And like every mission that they've ever been given, they will be the best in all of the Air Force and all of the National Guard, and the spirit of Pappy Larson and the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pilots who

have shared the cockpit seat of the Hooligans jet is something to celebrate and build on, it's not something anyone should take apart. Help us do the right thing here. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

Now let me call on my colleague, Congressman Earl Pomeroy.

(Applause.)

CONGRESSMAN POMEROY: Secretary Skinner, Secretary Coyle, Congressman Bilbray, again we thank you for your service to our country by serving as commissioners of this vitally important BRAC round. We're proud about the chance to tell you about our Happy Hooligans, the award-winning pilots and crews of the 119th Fighter Wing.

Now the BRAC evaluations, as we've been discussing, are full of matrices and models to aid in digesting the infinite data points relevant to evaluating force structure, but in the final analysis, it's unit performance, the actual records sustained over many years of service, that's most revealing of unit importance and capacity for further contributions. The performance, the people, the place; the models may not fairly reflect them, but that's where you will find the proven value of

our Happy Hooligans.

Performance. Consider this. Since 1990 the Happy Hooligans have flown more than 65,000 hours in F-16 aircraft without an accident. They've done this from dozens of locations all over the world in every kind of weather you can imagine. That achievement, combined with accident-free flying in the F-4 and F-101 fighter aircraft, is the longest continuous period of safe and effective aircraft operations of any Air National Guard fighter unit. Over 140,000 accident-free flying hours, ten Air Force outstanding unit awards, that is the real value contributed by the Happy Hooligans.

People. The record of the Happy Hooligans reflects a culture of excellence sustained year after year, and this is possible because the unit has been able to continuously bring into its ranks highly qualified and motivated individuals committed to serving their nation and state. This base is located smack in the middle of a recruitment gold mine. The Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area population has more than 170,000 people; more than 25,000 college students, 3,000 engineering students at North Dakota State University alone. The result is a feeder system of highly qualified recruits

capable of complex mission assignments, and bringing considerable talent to the unit mix in joint operations with the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

In short, the performance record of the Happy Hooligans is a direct result of this culture of excellence built upon the recruitment pool of the Fargo area. This means as long as they have missions to perform, they'll continue to excel for the Air Force and for us all.

Place. Complementing this culture of excellence is some of the best facilities in the Air Guard due to the \$16.5 million in infrastructure improvements since 1999, which makes it an attractive base for future flying missions. And Hector Airport does not face the encroachment and environmental problems hurting missions of other Air Guard missions around the country. Special-use airspace, where military comprises nearly a quarter of the airspace above North Dakota, and land use planning has been developed to accommodate present and future military needs.

We have excellent facilities, including modern buildings and infrastructure, abundant airspace and a brand-new runway. We have ramp space appropriate to the requirements of an Air National Guard unit,

and we are the only flying unit serving the state of North Dakota.

Now we're excited about this partnership advanced by the Air Force as the capacities of Grand Forks Air Force Base are combined with the Happy Hooligans in Fargo for executing the UAV mission. The assets of the Grand Forks and Fargo bases, from airspace to infrastructure to unit capability, for such a sophisticated assignment means we will succeed as we take on this important new mission.

However, a future flying mission for the North Dakota Air National Guard should not be precluded as part of this background. No other Air National Guard facility is hit with the broad restrictions that Fargo receives in the Department's recommendations. That language precludes other flying options when the F-16s presently being flown are retired. Now it is an unnecessary infringement on Air Force planning options. This language should be removed. I strongly believe that the Air Force should have the same operational flexibility for future planning for the Fargo installation that it has for all other Air National Guard bases. There's nothing from the facts on the ground which compels this unique language from BRAC to future Air Force

planners, and it's ill-advised to single out this base for this limiting language.

The Air National Guard should continue to possess a flying mission to train pilots, develop their skills with the intention of growing future UAV pilots and crews that do their current work. A UAV scenario such as described by the Air Force would require 70 pilots. Now Fargo's Air National Guard unit stands ready to supply many of those pilots and begin the training of the next generation of the Air Force UAV operators. Indeed, as the UAV mission still in its formative years of innovation develops, it is highly possible, I think likely, that the core location of the UAVs and the flying mission will be found to be the optimal basing strategy in order to maintain pilot flight hours and experience and capture other complementing synergies. These possibilities need not, they should not be foreclosed as part of BRAC. They're best left in the future programmatic options available to Air Force leadership.

Commissioners, thank you again for your service to our nation. We invite you back often in the years ahead in your individual capacities. With the missions assigned to Fargo and Grand Forks, we

believe you'll be seeing in the future here in North Dakota the future of the United States Air Force as it becomes an operational reality for our nation.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MAJOR GENERAL HAUGEN: Good morning, Commissioners, I'm Major General Mike Haugen, the Adjutant General for the State of North Dakota. Today 3,067 members of the North Dakota National Guard have served on active duty capacity since September 11, 2001. This is the second largest call-up in the history of the North Dakota National Guard, and this represents 74 percent of our total force. As I appear before you, there are 155 members in harm's way currently around the globe. Seven of these brave volunteers have made the ultimate sacrifice in this global war on terrorism, citizen soldiers who answered their nation's call.

As we look to the future force, it is important to understand the background of the National Guard and its importance in our history. The National Guard has been in place since 1636 and derives its, and is derived from our Constitution. Guard members are our sons, our daughters, mothers, fathers, friends and neighbors dispersed throughout

the state. They come from all walks of life but they are also military professionals. They are twice the citizen. That is the strength of the Guard. It is the strength of having roots in the community, the strength of having civilian skills that complement military skills. When you call out the Guard, you call out America.

The BRAC concept is sound, but its decisions should be based on assessed military value and a 20-year plan. In many of the Air Force recommendations we find subjectively weighted criteria and force structure decisions not intended for this process. Military value of the Air National Guard units and their strengths were virtually ignored, particularly as applied to the area of homeland defense and community support.

As you have already heard in prior hearings, collaboration between the United States Air Force and the Air National Guard was minimal in this process, as opposed to the Army and the Army National Guard. A major concern with the recommendation for the realignment of Hector Field is the removal of F-16s at Fargo was a programmatic change and should not have been made part of the BRAC recommendations. The reality is the retirement

of the Block 15 F-16s has been scheduled for several years, and to include it in the BRAC process is misleading.

Hector Field did not receive proper credit for its overall military value. The DoD criteria of application and scoring distorts the overall military value of Hector Field. It attempted to apply simple numeric formulas to a highly complex, multifaceted military environment. Now we agree infrastructure must be considered, but it should only be secondary to objectives of national defense policy.

The National Guard's ability to recruit, train, equip and retain at the community level are paramount to accomplishing these objectives and goals. Our current retention rate in Fargo is 98 percent. In nine of the last ten months, we have recruited, or retained rather, 100 percent of those eligible for recruiting.

Economies of the Air National Guard must be considered in concert with our 1-4-2-1 military defense strategies. The security requirements of the military are more complicated than just looking at the bottom line; for instance, who can drive the cheaper Humvee.

The Air Force weighting system clearly skewed the criteria to the largest Air Force bases and cities. Many of the Military Capability Index future requirements for 2025 were measured against cold war standards and not capabilities- or future-based. For example, if a base was in close proximity to a bombing range, it rated high. But we are already migrating to a future of smart bombers where electronic scoring greatly reduces the need for physical dumb bomb ranges. This is just a single example in which the process did not look to the future. We must instead use capabilities-based measurements.

A good example is Memorandums of Agreement with local authorities and Air Force bases. We have agreements with Fargo Airport, Minot Air Force Base and Grand Forks Air Force Base. These agreements allow us to maximize our capabilities at no additional cost to the taxpayer. For example, those Memorandums of Agreement have given us access to additional ramp space and vast quantities of jet fuel in Fargo with no cost of ownership. These cost-savings initiatives were not considered in the process. Had those capabilities been correctly weighted, it would be clear that the United States

Air Force surge capability is the Air National Guard.

Another area of concern is the impact of this process on homeland defense, border surveillance. Now there is greater flexibility when we have a combination of Title 10 and Title 32 airmen available. In many instances, again as the Governor pointed out, it is quicker to activate Title 32 members. For example, when the President asked the governors for additional security in the airports after 9/11, it took the North Dakota Air National Guard only hours to respond. Title 32 personnel, under command of the governor, are able to provide security that is not impacted by Posse Comitatus law.

This also applies to future missions with the UAV. It has the potential for interagency cooperation and cost savings when used with the Department of Homeland Security. For example, we can provide the Predator platform for operational training and simultaneously provide sensor data to Border Patrol, again with no Posse Comitatus conflict.

North Dakota has a proud history of serving with distinction, and welcome the Predator and

Global Hawk missions. We look forward to joining Grand Forks Air Force Base as well, and we believe there are strong possibilities for other emerging missions.

The senior leadership of the National Guard Bureau, the National Guard Association, the adjutants general and the state governors all agree there should be a manned flying unit in each state. How do we sustain a strong Air National Guard without a flying mission? If you have a volunteer fire department and you take away their trucks, hoses and ladders, are they still a fire department? How can it be an Air National Guard with no aircraft? The United States Air Force has acknowledged the advantages of leveraging the experience levels of the Air National Guard pilots and maintainers in the BRAC recommendation for Grand Forks, and we concur with this. However, by eliminating a flying mission at Hector Field they will likely decimate the core competency and eliminate that very strength they want to leverage.

Today's trained pilots are community-based. They will need to be replaced by newly trained pilots in new locations. The result is a huge loss of experience and very large training costs. The

cost of training a new fighter pilot, as given to us by the Air Force, is estimated to be \$4.8 million for each pilot. This human capital cost was not measured.

Fewer locations also degrade our ability to react quickly. It consolidates resources, a tactical error much like Pearl Harbor, where we concentrated a large number of assets in a small geographical area. We are now leaving large areas of our country uncovered, especially our northern border.

Now we embrace future missions. The North Dakota National Guard, in cooperation with Space Command, will place 167 Air National Guard security forces personnel at Minot Air Force Base in 2006, a mission currently accomplished only by active-duty personnel. We today are in consultation with 20th Air Force, discussing the future of the Cavalier Air Station and the possibility of National Guard members replacing Air Force personnel at that location, and for the last three years we have been working with Special Operations personnel at the DoD level, along with Air Force and Army senior leaders, working on and planning an airspace initiative that would include joint training opportunity, both

aviation and ground training, joint training for all services with special emphasis on the needs of Special Operations Command, and the Governor has provided you with a video detailing this initiative.

The North Dakota Air National Guard has a proven record of, as has already been stated, 140,000 fighter accident-free flying hours, 67,000 hours in the single-engine F-16 with zero loss of aircraft. When we talk of cost savings, consider the Air Force average of fighter aircraft lost to accidents with the same number of flying hours, seven to eight aircraft would have been lost already in the United States Air Force. We have saved approximately \$130 million as a result of accident-free flying, or ten times more than the proposed 20-year savings listed in the BRAC report.

(Applause.)

It saves money to keep Hector Field in manned aircraft. Was this considered in the MCI process? It was not. I respectfully request the Commission exercise its authority to remove Hector Field from the realignment recommendation list. The retirement of the F-16 is a programmatic change. It should not be part of the BRAC recommendation. At a minimum we request the justification language "without a flying

mission backfill" be deleted. Hector Field is the only unit singled out in the BRAC report with language that specifically states "no flying mission backfill."

On behalf of all the men and women who wear the uniform of their services, I thank you for your willingness to serve on this Commission, and I thank you for your time.

(Applause.)

MAJOR GENERAL McDONALD: Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Alec McDonald, I'm a retired member of the North Dakota Air National Guard and the United States Air Force with over 45 years of service, 41 of which was as a rated fighter pilot. I was Commander of the Happy Hooligans for 13 years, served as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander in Chief on NORAD and completed my military service as the Adjutant General of North Dakota from 1984 to '93.

I wish to make it clear at the onset that I fully support the addition of the UAV mission to the North Dakota scene. I believe the partnership of the North Dakota Air National Guard and the United States Air Force operating out of Grand Forks will serve the needs of this nation in an economical and

professional manner. My testimony will be centered on three issues; the mission capability of Hector, the misuse of the BRAC process by the Air Force, and the Happy Hooligans' unmatched history of professionalism and achievement.

The Air Force significantly deviated from the established norm when they developed the detailed criteria for the fighter Mission Capability Index. The deviation was to the disadvantage of the smaller, more economical Air National Guard facilities. This is evidenced by the fact that of the 50 highest-scoring bases for fighters, only five were Air National Guard or Reserve, but of the 50 lowest-scoring bases with runways, 96 percent are Air National Guard facilities or Air Force Reserve facilities. The other two of that bottom 50 are Arnold and Hanscom Air Force Stations, who do not meet the basic criteria for fighters, yet are rated nearly the same as Hector. Neither meets the standards for a serviceable, suitable auxiliary airfield which requires an 8,000 foot runway, much less having the facilities and operating base, nor do they have barriers. Arnold is shown in the Air Force Installation Capacity Summary as requiring \$182 million in construction to be capable of basing

one squadron.

The detailed criteria also rates airspace supporting the mission three times, Criteria 1245, 1246 and 1266, without taking into account the mission of the evaluated base. This heavy weighting of areas that may have no mission relevance distorts the evaluation. It would not be economically prudent for a base tasked with a specific mission to develop airspace and/or ranges that were excess or not pertinent to the mission.

In addition, many of the bases rating above Hector, which stands at 125 in the fighter MCI of 154 rated, are not now and many have never been fighter bases. For example, Pope Air Force Base has a fighter MCI standing of 17; nor the other five ratings with, higher than Hector, have runways that meet the Air Force definition of serviceable and suitable. Phoenix and Salt Lake City are but two of those bases rated higher than Hector, yet have infrastructure that is questionable for fighter aircraft.

Bases with large ramps, high-capacity fuel storage, large hangars, auxiliary fields within 50 miles, and ranges and airspace that may not even be appropriate for that kind of aircraft scored

significantly higher, regardless of fighter-unique requirements. Now the meeting of all those criteria would inflate costs not only of construction but of yearly maintenance and may be of no benefit to fighter operations.

Therefore, without having the classified data available, it appears many of the criteria were arbitrary and are indefensible.

More blatantly, Hector was not recognized as having large areas of undeveloped acreage available at no cost for expansion, Criterias 1205.1 and 2, and suffers no encroachment, Criteria 1207. It is also important to note that if these criterias are to be rated, Hector's Memos of Understanding with the Municipal Airport Authority will provide at little or no cost additional ramp, hangar and jet fuel availability. The Guard incurs no construction or maintenance costs but has them available when required.

The information given to you by the Air Force assumes that highly experienced Air National Guard 7 and 9 level airmen -- and check that right graph on the experience level of the Guard versus the Air Force in 7 level -- will move when a unit is downsized. This has proven to be false. Many are

drill-position individuals whose living is made outside of the Guard. Obviously they're not going to move.

Pilots are said to be very mobile since the majority of them fly with airlines. At Hector, the latest numbers show four of our pilots are presently flying with the airlines. Many are local businesses or are professionals, and they would look long and hard before assuming an obligation involving commuting that results in additional hours away from home and work. I cannot quantify the dollars required to replace those individuals, but I can state that you will not replace their skill for years to come.

The Air Force is also using BRAC as programmatic actions and vice versa. Now COBRA shows no personnel actions. However, as the Headquarters USAF state-by-state installation slide 42 shows, Hector suffers a reduction through 2011 of 196 full-time and 509 drill positions. Now COBRA writes these losses off as programmatic along with the aircraft requirement, the loss of firefighters, the closure of the regional training site, and all the personnel costs, reduction-in-force costs, change-of-station costs, all of this associated with

its actions, but it is actually the proposed phrase "no flying mission backfill" that causes a loss because it restricts future programmatic changes after 2007.

Furthermore, all costs are not shown. The Department of Transportation/FAA will, at airports, incur a cost of approximately \$8 million for a firefighting station and its associated equipment. The Department of the Army MILCON show costs for locating of a USAR unit to Hector, as shown in the BRAC, as 7.9 million. Now accepting the Air Force BRAC savings that they give of \$12.9 million as shown on COBRA as correct, but if we add the DoD costs and if we add the Army MILCON costs, I think the taxpayers are going to lose 30 million bucks out of their pocket. You can't put it any other way.

If BRAC accepts the DoD recommendations, the eastern, western and southern borders will have dedicated air superiority forces. The DoD appears not to rate the teaching values; therefore, the result is a large area of our northern border with no readily available air defense resources.

Now I have been challenged to say, well, where are these aircraft going to come from to replace the Hooligans' F-16s? Realizing their removal is a

result of programmatic actions, I would ask that some of the 54 F-15s being programmatically displaced from Eglin and Tyndall Air Force Base be considered. Now these actions are again shown on that Department of the Air Force state-by-state slide, slide No. 47; however, the disposition of the aircraft is not shown. I'm going to stick my neck out. I'm going to volunteer North Dakota to accept some of those aircraft.

(Applause.)

This action will provide northern border defense and retain the clearly superior unit as an Air National Guard fighter squadron.

The Air Force is also attempting a major shift in the composition of its force structure through the BRAC process rather than through programmatic actions. The circumvention of a long-standing policy without Congressional input and oversight is unprecedented. The total force policy in effect, put into effect by Secretary Mel Laird and General Creighton Abrams in the aftermath of the Vietnam War was to preclude the United States from ever going to war without calling up its Reserve forces. The action by the Air Force to realign the force mix, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve,

through the BRAC process should be viewed with skepticism.

Now the Happy Hooligans are acknowledged by all as one of the finest, if not the finest, fighter unit in the United States military. The pride, dedication and professionalism as is evidenced by their many awards and exemplary safety records make the Happy Hooligans a national treasure that cannot be duplicated. It took generations to build this unit --

(Applause.)

-- into what it now is, but that can be easily destroyed by a stroke of the pen. The possibility that the Happy Hooligans could be disbanded is even more outrageous when we consider that in any results-oriented evaluation they would rank near the top of all organizations performing a flight mission. They have safeguarded our nation; now it is time for the Commission to recognize that professionalism. We are asking you to remove the "no fly mission backfill." This language is used nowhere else in the entire DoD recommendations to the Commission. No other base has been so singled out. The removal of that phrase will allow this outstanding organization to make its case to the Air

Force and the National Guard Bureau for further missions after the retirement of its Block 15 F-16s.

In fact, I question why Hector was even included in a BRAC process, since all of the proposed actions are, according to COBRA, are a result of programmatic decisions.

In closing, you should not allow poorly designed, skewed evaluations that severely distort the mission capability of the organization and its base to prevent future programmatic actions that will utilize its potential to continue its superior service to our state and nation.

Gentlemen, again, delete the phrase "no flying mission backfill." Thank you for your consideration.

(Applause.)

MAYOR FURNESS: Good morning, Commissioners, I'm Bruce Furness, Mayor of the City of Fargo, and proud to briefly tell you about our city and its relationship with the Happy Hooligans. I know time is of concern, I will try to condense this on the fly here.

I want to talk to you about the outstanding partnership we have with them and with the entire Fargo/Moorhead region and why the entire region is

crucial to their continued success. Fargo has been home to the Hooligans and the National Guard since 1947. The partnership forged between the city, the Airport Authority and the Air National Guard has been mutually beneficial and greatly rewarding for all parties. This outstanding fighter unit has been, has brought great distinction to our city. They are the best of the best as you have heard; first defenders of the Pentagon and the Capitol on 9/11, Hughes Achievement Award winner, William Tell winner three times, you've heard of their incredible safety record. These top performers live, work and play in our community and are integral to our culture.

Fargo is one of the fastest-growing cities between Minneapolis and Seattle. We have managed to maintain a healthy economy over the years, avoiding the peaks and valleys that cycle through the national economy. Our MSA population is nearly 180,000, and at current growth rates Fargo alone will be around 250,000 by the year 2050.

Fargo has a regional economy that is both vibrant and growing. We have an expanding labor force, strong retail sales, significant wage growth and record levels of building permits. This

vibrancy, along with a "can do" attitude enables us to be an exceedingly progressive community. We are a regional trade center offering services in the medical, education, manufacturing, distribution and other commercial industries to name a few. We have excellent K through 12 schools, three outstanding universities and two other post-secondary institutions. We are emerging as a high technology center with over 80 high-tech companies led by Microsoft Business Solutions. North Dakota State University has a new and rapidly expanding Technology Research Park focusing on radio frequency identification tags, and since 2003, NDSU has been doing research on how crews flying Predator UAVs can be more effective.

The next two slides are indicators of our outstanding quality of life in the F/M area and are included in your packets for your review. This is only from the last two years. All of this suggests an excellent recruiting base for the Air National Guard. 25,000 post-secondary students possessing a strong work ethic provide a pool for a very productive and reliable work force. Firms that have relocated to Fargo have all expressed this factor as our strongest asset. More and more of our young

people are staying in the region thanks to these increased job opportunities and higher-paying jobs in this very strong economy.

Our City Commission, City Planning Commission and Airport Authority are all acutely aware of the Air National Guard requirements at Hector and have taken appropriate actions. There are no encroachment issues at the airport. 3,000 acres of land has been purchased to protect the airport operations. Future Air National Guard space needs can be easily accommodated at no additional cost.

The facilities themselves are excellent. The 9,000-foot main runway was newly constructed just last year. New aircraft arresting systems were also installed at the same time. The Air Traffic Control Tower operates 24 hours a day. A new state-of-the-art digital radar system will be in place next year, and just one of the few in the country. Superior maintenance of these facilities is a point of pride among the Hooligans personnel.

I wanted to put in two quick corrections on the BRAC data items. The first indicates that six accredited child care centers do business in Fargo. The actual number is closer to 475. The second indicates that four graduate Ph.D. programs exist in

our area. NDSU alone has 56 masters degrees and 38 Ph.D. programs.

So to recap, Fargo, with its continued growth, prosperity and vitality, is critical to the success of the Happy Hooligans. High recruitment potential, excellent facilities, no encroachment issues, expansion possibilities and a source of high quality personnel are all vital to the Air National Guard. The Hooligans are the best performing fighter unit in our national arsenal. This fact is due in large part to their location. This region has consistently produced people who perform extraordinarily well. I submit that this performance cannot be replicated elsewhere. Their superior ability and capability should be retained as a fighting force in Fargo.

(Applause.)

SENATOR CONRAD: I, too, have cut my testimony so that we can pay attention to the --

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: That's unusual for a senator.

(Laughter.)

SENATOR CONRAD: We don't have the two-minute rule in the United States Senate.

Our message today on Fargo is very simple.

Keep Fargo open.

(Applause.)

Let us bring our record of excellence to the new UAV mission, and don't foreclose future opportunities for a flying mission. Fargo produces exceptionally high military value for the United States Air Force. It has much more modern facilities than most Guard installations. Fargo has access to the least crowded airspace in the United States, and the community offers great recruiting and outstanding support. These assets have generated an outstanding performance record.

The Happy Hooligans are the best fighter unit in the United States Air Force and they have the best safety record in the world. You have heard loud and clear that the North Dakota Air Guard is eager to bring its tradition of high performance to one of the fastest growing, most exciting missions in the Air Force. The plan sent to this Commission by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force is to put a squadron of 12 Predators on the ground in Grand Forks with a combined Guard/active-duty launch team. Those aircraft would be flown from Fargo and the intelligence from those aircraft will be analyzed at Fargo. We see the future and we

embrace it. We have no doubt that the Fargo Air Guard will set the standard for excellence in UAV operations.

You've also heard that the Fargo Air Guard and the Fargo community enthusiastically embrace the concept of joint operations. Fargo stands ready to support other associate relationships with Grand Forks, in UAVs or in tankers, and Fargo's UAV potential is outstanding. We have also a tremendous potential to help with homeland security. But at the heart, the Hooligans are a Fargo unit. We think they also need to maintain a flying mission in Fargo. You have also heard today that we totally disagree with the BRAC analysis that Hector ranked low in military value. How can we rank low in military value when we have the best performers in the Hooligans? How can that be?

(Applause.)

We think this analysis just misses the mark. To sum up, first the BRAC analysis did not capture the runway just built at Hector Field.

Second, Fargo rated low on military value because it did not have millions of square yards of ramp space, but you don't need millions of square yards of ramp space for a Guard unit. It's

important the Commission distinguish between true military value and the MCI index that the Air Force has developed to try to measure military value.

Third, Fargo scored low on access to ranges and training airspace. When I saw that I must say my reaction was shock. These people must never have been to North Dakota.

(Laughter.)

We've got, we've got the most open airspace in the United States. The Air Force analysis focused on more ranges, not better ranges.

With all of Fargo's advantages and the flaws in the military value analysis, we urge the Commission to remove the language in the BRAC justification singling out Fargo for "no flying mission backfill." It is unnecessary, it is inappropriate, and it is counterproductive. The lack of a flying mission in Fargo will hurt recruitment. It further exacerbates the gap created along the northern border by the departure of so many air bases.

This is where we are going into the BRAC round with respect to northern border Air Guard flying units. But look what would happen if the recommendations are adopted. This makes no sense.

This chart shows the before and after. We'll go from eight guard bases to three, with none between Wisconsin and Idaho. We don't know what needs the Air Force and the Air Guard may face over the next 20 years, so it would be a profound mistake to limit the ability of the Air Force and Army Guard to make future programmatic decisions to give Fargo a flying mission. We're not asking you to find us specific aircraft for the future, although we would surely take that, we just want you to remove that "no flying mission" language.

I want to close where I started. Keep Fargo open, endorse the Air Force UAV proposal, and preserve the option of a flying mission out of Fargo.

On September 11th of 2001, I was in the capitol complex when security personnel told me to leave. When I got outside I heard the roar of jets overhead and looked up to see F-16s patrolling the skies. On that fateful day, Fargo's Happy Hooligans were the first to rise to this nation's defense. That was a very proud moment for me, a very proud moment for our state.

The Vice President of the United States said this: [Begin audio] "I want to express our nation's

gratitude to the Air Guard's 119th Fighter Wing, whose F-16s defended the skies over Washington that morning. In a time of great peril and uncertainty, you were America's first line of defense and we'll never forget it." [End audio.]

(Applause.)

SENATOR CONRAD: "America's first line of defense, we will never forget it." I believe America will not forget it. Again, Commissioners, we thank you sincerely for your attention and for your attendance. We thank you all.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Is there further testimony? We wanted to go to questions now, and I'll start with Commissioner Coyle.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question to start with for Governor Hoeven, or maybe General Haugen, I'm not sure.

Losing the F-16 jets, and with no flying mission to take its place, what would the governor of the state of North Dakota or, for that matter, the governor of Minnesota do if you had a homeland defense emergency of some sort? If you needed air defense forces, if you had a homeland security

issue, what would you do if this DoD recommendation were to be enacted?

GOVERNOR HOEVEN: Thank you, Commissioner Coyle, I'll start on that question and then ask Adjutant General Mike Haugen to follow. It's absolutely the right question because there are a lot of needs to be had in the state as part of homeland security that require a flying mission. That's typically true on the northern border here for any border state like North Dakota because it involves both the international issues as a border to a foreign country, as well as the issues that any other state might have.

Let me give you some specific examples that I referred to right in my testimony. For example, we not only need that flying mission in its direct capacity for the transportation asset that it provides, but it also brings other specialties here that we need to recruit and retain in the Air Guard. For example, retaining medics, security police, civil engineers, firemen, civil support teams, all of those things, we're able to recruit and retain qualified personnel for those specialties only if we have that flying mission, and that's why it's absolutely imperative that we have it.

And the final point is this. The adjutant generals from throughout the country and their association got together, took the formal position that every state must have at least one flying mission in the Guard. Some states have multiple flying missions. If the flying mission is removed from Fargo, we have no flying mission in the Guard. Every state should have at least one flying mission to meet these homeland security needs. That's the position of all the adjutant generals nationally, strongly supported by the Guard, certainly strongly supported by the nation's governors. Appreciate the question.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL MCDONALD: Commissioner Coyle, I would just reiterate some of the same points that the Governor made. A flying mission brings to each state all of those things that the Governor mentioned; firefighters, security police, medics, civil engineers. It brings a great deal of communication. In Fargo we have a 24-hour command post that's in direct contact with NORTHCOM, so the communications they provide is sometimes even overlooked. We also have the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile Distribution Center. You

don't want to be bringing in the national pharmaceutical stockpile to an unprotected area or airport that could possibly be contaminated during that process. So an Air Guard becomes a very logical place to distribute that.

The Air Force in this case, I believe, should trust the CEOs that they have hired, and that is the general officers of the Pentagon, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, the adjutant generals of the states, and the governors in distributing assets. Instead, they want to put in BRAC statute movement of such things as three airplanes here, three airplanes there, 12 firefighters here, 12 firemen and some of their equipment there. In statute. I mean those are decisions that should be made at the lieutenant colonel level almost, and here we want to put it in statute to hamstring further general officers, governors and leadership in the United States for the next 20 years.

I believe that's fundamentally wrong and business could never survive doing that, so why are we doing that in our government?

COMMISSIONER COYLE: And with respect to F-16s or F-15s, if there were some sort of air defense emergency in Grand Forks or Bismarck, how

long would it take jet fighters to get here from Idaho or Wisconsin or wherever that might be?

MAJOR GENERAL HAUGEN: Sir, the aircraft that are closest to us are actually in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. However, they are a bomb-dropping organization, not an air-to-air organization. So they would take probably the least amount of time. However, if you look at Idaho, those are A-10s, they have no air-to-air capability, they are air-to-ground. Wisconsin would be the next closest, and then you go to Burlington, Vermont. The question is probably not how long would it take to get here but what could they do once they get here. Well, they would be out of gas, and without the tankers in Grand Forks --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: I have one question, I know we're running a little bit behind and we want to catch up here, but we're going to take all the time we need. This is a question for General Haugen, and I would ask General Shellito from the Minnesota Air National Guard, who will be here in a few minutes, to maybe incorporate this into his remarks. I would like to talk about utilization and availability of Air National Guard

units versus active guard units and what those, and what anticipated challenges and how they're going to be dealt with going forward, given the fact that deployments have been on a regular and sustained basis for the last two years. You have about three minutes to do it, that's not fair.

MAJOR GENERAL HAUGEN: Commissioner Skinner, I would say that I know in Fargo since 2001 we have had 970 of our members volunteer and have been on active duty. They have ranged from several weeks in Fargo to several months in Baghdad and Afghanistan. We have many, many personnel who are on their second rotation. Not their first, but their second. The volunteerism that we have at that unit is phenomenal, but it is not necessarily unique.

We have, in this country, for the last 32 years, not had a draft. We're all volunteers. And the volunteerism that seems to, seems to be questioned sometimes of our Air Force brethren and say how do you order people to go; it's not how we order them to go, it's how do we get them to quit coming out to the base and wanting to go. Those people that I mentioned during my testimony, in the last nine months out of, nine out of the ten months,

100 percent of the people who have been able to get out at the end of their enlistment have reenlisted. Our reenlistment rate for those who have deployed is nearly as high as our average. I mean it's way above 90 percent.

Now I know that there's a great deal of discussion in the media about low enlistments or reenlistments. Retention is not a problem in North Dakota in either the Army or the Air. The only retention problem I have is after 30 years I want to get rid of some of these people to make room for the younger ones and I can't. They want to stay.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: So then you don't anticipate any problems on availability going forward for deployment for the next several years and that you would be on an equal footing as far as availability as the active duty?

MAJOR GENERAL HAUGEN: Commissioner Skinner, I tell you what, I think that we have had an unprecedented level of volunteerism for this war. This is a popular action, and the reason it is popular is because we talked about this for a year before we went to Iraq, six months, one month, one week. We told Saddam Hussein we were coming on

Tuesday at what time. And that's healthy. That's good for democracy. You debate going to war. That's what should be done in democracy and we did that, and that is what is enabling us to provide volunteers, and I do not anticipate any problem with volunteerism for any mission that the Air Force gives us in the future, just the way we have participated in the past.

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Before we call the Minnesota panel, I would like to say that we were very impressed with your testimony from the delegation; the governor, the mayors and generals. Many of us are very concerned about what's happening with the Air Guard. In my own state of Nevada we lose all of our flying assets, too, and I think we'll take that into consideration, and I think the Happy Hooligans, I personally would like to make them happy. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: There will be no break, we'll go straight to Minnesota because we're running behind. Thank you all. And don't everybody leave because Minnesota's coming on.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: The first person who is ready from Minnesota, please start. Oh, you've got to be sworn. You're right, we don't trust those Minnesotans.

(Witnesses sworn.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Please begin.

CERTIFIED

REGIONAL HEARING OF THE BRAC COMMISSION
DULUTH, MINNESOTA AIR NATIONAL GUARD STATION

SENATOR DAYTON: I just want to see you swear in everyone else involved in this process.

Commission Members, I'm Senator Mark Dayton, I want to thank you for permitting us, the Minnesota delegation, to make a separate presentation regarding the Duluth Air National Guard. We will honor our half hour of allotted time, and to help us do so, I would ask that those who remain of our really terrific audience today to withhold any applause or any other instinctive reactions to Minnesotans until our conclusion.

(Laughter.)

It's important that you North Dakotans know that Duluth's future, as we have been told, is completely separate and not competitive with Grand Forks' or Fargo's. What we do share is the Duluth 148th Fighter Wing's dedication to being the best whenever our president or our governor calls upon them, and the 148th's proven record of outstanding performance, whatever and wherever they are commanded to do it.

As you Commission members know, the proposed changes affecting Duluth's mission and personnel are

not contained in the Pentagon BRAC recommendations but rather in the Future Total Force plan which accompanied it. In my four and a half years as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee I've experienced too many unwelcome and objectionable surprises, and this is one of the most objectionable because of its unfair and unwarranted effects on the superb men and women who comprise the 148th, so I ask you to give this and the other proposed changes contained under the Future Total Force plan the critical review which my committee and frankly all of my colleagues in the Senate and in the House, I believe, were denied, and provide at least the latitude for us to work with the Air Force and Air National Guard Commands to enable Duluth and its 148th to continue to serve our nation.

So to continue, I would like to call upon my good friend and partner in the Senate, Senator Norm Coleman.

(Applause.)

SENATOR COLEMAN: Commissioners, once again I appreciate the opportunity to come before you, and I want to speak about the importance of the Air Guard base at Duluth and its importance for the region and for our country. I want to begin by

acknowledging that the Defense Department's recommendation, the BRAC recommendation is for Duluth to stay open. This recommendation is very important and should be retained in the final BRAC report.

Of deep concern is the recommendation that the F-16s flown by the pilots in Duluth be retired in the next couple of years with no follow-on mission. In real terms that means the loss of half of the jobs at the Duluth base, and I'm going to be very, very candid with you. I, and I know many of my colleagues in Congress, were rather taken aback to see the placement of aircraft in the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations at all. That is a Future Total Force issue, it should be -- a policy discussion should be part of that, and one questions whether it should be in a report like this, nor should the articulation of the follow-on mission be in a report like this. That's why a number of us took our case to the Pentagon yesterday.

We had a very, very good conversation yesterday with General Blum and General James, and we were pleased to get a commitment from General Blum to make sure Duluth has a relevant and viable future mission. After all, the observations I made

in my remarks about Grand Forks are all equally applicable to the case of Duluth. This part of the country grows top-notch warriors of the north, and it grows them in abundance. If we require that Duluth's planes be parked without a defining follow-on mission, the Air Force will essentially turn its back on a region that has produced one of the most outstanding units in the country and has citizens lining up at the recruiter's office.

The last time I checked, the Air Force was an all-volunteer force. In these difficult times, I do not think it is wise to pull your resources out of an area which leads the country in recruiting and retention.

Duluth has outstanding facilities, the newest hangar in the Air Force, and a brand-new consolidated maintenance complex. There's plenty of outstanding training space even at low altitudes. In fact, Duluth has more training space than Nellis Air Force Base, and it has room to grow. Duluth has the same geographical advantage that I talked about with regard to North Dakota, and yet 20 years ago the Air Force closed its active-duty base in Duluth, decimating the National Guard base, which is what happens if the current plan goes forward without a

follow-on mission; leaves this part of the country even more neglected in the Air Force's plans.

For all the reasons I have discussed, it simply doesn't make sense to move all your assets south. Leaders in Duluth have already concluded they cannot fly these F-16s forever, we all understand that. The planes are relatively old, though still very functional. Ultimately what this community and this country needs is for the men and women of Duluth, A, to transition to a new and well-defined flying mission and, B, to keep flying F-16s until they are ready to make this transition.

And finally, just a few words about the National Guard. Because it is a state entity, the National Guard has unique requirements related to homeland security, national disaster response and the needs of the governor on top of their federal role. Unfortunately, many of these needs were not reflected in the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations.

Therefore, my request of the Commission is that in your final report on BRAC you give the National Guard Bureau the needed flexibility to ensure that they're able to work with leaders in Minnesota to craft a follow-on flying mission for the Duluth 148th.

With that, it's my great pleasure to introduce the Governor of the State of Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty.

(Applause.)

GOVERNOR PAWLENTY: Good morning, and thank you for coming to our part of the country to listen to our concerns. I'm Governor Tim Pawlenty, and I want to say while we're addressing our comments in this segment to the concerns about the recommendations at the Duluth Air Base, I did submit written testimony regarding Grand Forks, and we echo and certainly strongly support the arguments that were made here on behalf of North Dakota. Clearly those concerns transcend the North Dakota/Minnesota boundaries, and we support their perspective with respect to the Fargo and Grand Forks facilities as well.

When Congress created the BRAC commission, it created a powerful tool for getting the most out of our national defense dollars, but like every powerful tool it has to be used carefully, because if it is overused or misused, it can create a lot of unforeseen damage, and we are pleased that you take your responsibilities so seriously that you come to hear these concerns to make sure the powerful tool

is used appropriately.

I would like to make two principal points. First, like Senator Coleman, we are very pleased that the Department of Defense has recommended that the Duluth Air Base stay open, but they also have noted, through a related process, that the F-16s be retired, in our view on an accelerated basis, in fiscal year 2007. Like Senator Coleman, we understand that the Block 25 F-16s are going to be retired at some point in the future but we need to make sure, if the base is going to stay open, that a follow-on mission be identified, and we did receive a good commitment, a general commitment from General Blum and General James yesterday that that would be underway for the Duluth base.

But in terms of the process, we're concerned that we have the FTF, or Future Total Force effort, and the BRAC effort overlapping in ways that are a little concerning, or at least a little awkward, sometimes confusing. In other words, keep the base open but get rid of the 148th wing in the form of the F-16s, those two things seem to be in conflict or at least some tension between those things. So we hope that you would focus, as best you can in your deliberations and your recommendations, on

facilities, not programs. And we don't believe an F-16 is really a facility in the traditional sense of the word in terms of infrastructure and the like.

We appreciate, by the way, the willingness of the Commission to explore that issue or that concern further by holding the hearing in Atlanta on June 30th, 2005, and we will certainly send a representative to be part of that discussion further, but thank you for hearing that out some more.

I also want to speak to the important state role in the area of homeland security and response to national disasters and other challenges that we face. I've been governor for less than three years, about two and a half years. I've called out the Minnesota National Guard on numerous occasions, including in response to elevated national security and homeland security concerns, including numerous times with respect to natural disasters and related issues, and so this concern or this perspective is important, and we echo the testimony that you heard from North Dakota.

First of all, we can't keep our nation-leading status, and by the way it is statistically proven, we've got the number one Army

National Guard in the country when it comes to recruitment and retention, and our Air Guard is in the very top as well, and we can't get people excited about joining and being there and being retained if we don't have a mission that's relevant to them. We can't have an Air National Guard and expect it to be high functioning when you don't have aircraft to speak of. So I know you heard that as part of the North Dakota presentation; it applies equally to Duluth as well.

It's important we also want to make sure that we reconcile some of the potential inconsistencies in the report, or at least concerns. There's a recommendation that Duluth continue on as an air sovereignty alert site, a term of art. Air sovereignty alert site. That implies certain capabilities. If you are an air sovereignty alert site and you have no airplanes, that creates a real problem. So we understand that air sovereignty alert is a term of art as a function. As a mission it's important -- we applaud the recognition of that status at the Duluth facility -- but pretty tough to do without airplanes that have the ability to respond.

We also want to underline and underscore the

state mission. We cannot, just from a recruitment and retention standpoint, but there's a bona fide need to have air capabilities within Minnesota to respond to those needs.

In closing, thank you for being here. We hope that the BRAC commission as fully as possible can focus on facilities and not programs or subfacility-type equipment decisions for the reasons the Senator outlined, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue in Atlanta regarding those issues.

Thank you very much for your time and for the chance to address you this morning. Up next we have the Minnesota tag, our Adjutant General Larry Shellito.

(Applause.)

MAJOR GENERAL SHELLITO: Commissioners, thank you for allowing me to testify this morning. First of all, Governor Pawlenty and I fully embrace the base realignment and closure process. When used properly, BRAC benefits us all, but I do have some concerns. I'm not concerned because of this Commission, not because our nation's military is in the process of transforming itself, not even because the Minnesota fighter wing will eventually lose its

F-16s. I am concerned because I believe the United States Air Force and the Department of Defense are using BRAC as a way to get around our time-honored process requiring Congress to review, authorize and appropriate money for defense programs. By including major elements of the Air Force's future total force transformation program under the auspices of BRAC, the Department of Defense has effectively excluded Congress from its traditional role.

The Air Force plan, and I'm not sure whether to call it BRAC or Air Force Future Total Force, calls for existing bases like the one at Duluth to be established as enclaves. They define an enclave as an air base without any aircraft that hosts combat support units. I wish I could describe the rationale behind this concept but I cannot. Neither my colleagues nor I, the officers in charge of implementing this concept, have been afforded an opportunity to provide input.

It is not clear whether the enclave base will adequately sustain combat support missions. Without flying missions, the infrastructure that would normally support the deployment of engineers, security police and medical personnel simply

wouldn't exist. Additionally, it is unclear whether these enclave bases could sustain personnel recruiting and retention at an adequate level without the attraction of a flying mission.

I have a very personal interest in this. The Minnesota National Guard is ranked number one in the nation for the Army recruiting and retention and ranked number three in the Air Force recruiting and retention.

Are enclaves good or bad? Despite my negative comments, the truth is we just don't know. The concept has never been studied. What we do know is that the Air Force Future Total Force plan contained in its BRAC recommendations signals a profound change in the way the Air Force wants to do business. When the Air Force made its military value determinations for the BRAC recommendations, it gave heavy weight scoring to large installations.

While locating aircraft in a few large bases may seem efficient, it ignores the value of small and every bit as efficient Air Guard bases like Duluth. However, in terms of military value, there was no apparent worth assigned to Air National Guard community basing.

We are a militia nation. We organize, our

organized militia, now called the National Guard, was not created by the Constitution to be the most cost-effective organization possible. It was created, though, as a political construct designed to keep checks and balances in place on the use of our military. Placing the Air National Guard in our nation's communities keeps America in tune with the Air Force. Citizens learn about the Air Force and the missions it's performing from the Air National Guard citizen airmen, who are their coworkers, fellow Rotarians or neighbors. Those informed citizens will lend their support to the military because they understand the issues and have a personal connection. And that was the intent after the Vietnam War when our nation established the total force policy that said we would never go to war without the involvement of our National Guard and federal Reserve forces. I am not sure if that was the intent, but the issues before this BRAC Commission go much further than the cost-effectiveness of installation infrastructure.

I urge you to look beyond the specific Air Force recommendations and examine the process. I know the Air Force wants to retire its legacy aircraft quickly and recapitalize the savings in

order to acquire more modern aircraft, and there is no question that our nation's military must evolve and transform itself, but that process should be accomplished in an open and measured manner where issues can be evaluated and debated by all concerned. Do not let the Air Force use the BRAC process as a way to shield itself.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you. I will be followed by Brigadier General (Retired) Ray Klosowski.

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL KLOSOWSKI: Good morning. I will focus my remarks on Duluth Air National Guard specifically and how some of the criteria in the BRAC affected Duluth, and possibly reveal to you how some of that criteria may not be appropriate or accurate.

The presentation -- next slide, Andy -- the presentation is based on data derived from these three sources, so it's DoD data.

Next one. The thing that got Duluth interested was the fact that we read the first release, which you can read up there, that Duluth was ranked very low in military value.

Subsequently, the Secretary of Defense said that

Duluth was a valuable installation, and that sort of characterizes some of the criteria in the BRAC in that it can be a little bit questionable and misleading.

Next slide, Andy. Some evaluations and focus of data seem to pertain to operations and concepts that have been overtaken by time and equipment development, and those were alluded to in a couple of previous presentations, and we'll cover some of these in the short time we've got allocated to Duluth.

Next one. When you look at the prevailing weather conditions in the Duluth rating, it didn't do very well. We got .83 out of a possible 20.68. The whole basis for the weather category determination is an arbitrary ceiling of 3,000 feet and three miles. It has no meaning to the Air Force. We don't cancel or fly based on that recommendation. We fly down to the weather minimums. What we should be looking at in the BRAC is what kind of approach aids do you have, what kind of ILS do you have, what kind of runway lighting do you have; that's where the BRAC needs to focus.

Next one. So as I mentioned, the criteria doesn't evaluate anything. Also, when you look at

the BRAC criteria, why is there no evaluation for the core mission, such as the tanker mission? That seems like it should be in there and could have skewed ratings for other units. So we are looking at an arbitrarily false criteria that doesn't have any meaning for future Air Force operations.

Next one. The ratings for the Duluth munitions site. We did okay in the UAV business but not much in the other areas, and the rating factor for the weapon storage site may not have taken in a key critical factor, and that's quantity distance criteria. In order to store a significant amount of weaponry you need 1,250 feet. Many of the units in the Air Force and the National Guard do not have that.

Next one. The storage site at Duluth is a former nuclear storage site, so it at one time held something like 20, actually 30 AIR-2A nuclear rockets. It's currently used to store all of the air defense weapons possessed by the Duluth Air National Guard, so it can support a fighter unit. It's also used to store chaff and flares, defensive countermeasures, for Duluth and Minneapolis C-130 units. The storage site also has the capability to maintain and build all the munitions that the Air

Force has in the air-to-ground role. You don't put a bunch of weapons at Duluth and haul them someplace. The airplanes go to where the weapons are. So the value of a munitions storage site using that concept is questionable because the weapons will already be where you're going.

There are few sites -- next slide, Andy -- that offer the potential growth that Duluth does, and you can see from the graphic that it's isolated, it has the latest state-of-the-art security, it's not encroached on anyone, and it is United States Air Force property, it's not leased, so it's a valuable asset.

Next one. The proximity to low-level routes. The rating for Duluth to low-level routes looks like it's been, it's too low, based on the inability of unit personnel to provide amplifying data on these routes.

Next one. Duluth has bidirectional routes. In other words, you can start at one end, finish at the other end, or start at this end and go to the other end, and the Air Force gives criteria value points based on how close those entry and exit points are. 50 points gets you a lot of points in the value process.

Next one, Andy. There shows Duluth in the middle of the low-level routes. Each of those yellow dots is an alternate entry point. Duluth has many alternate entry points, all within 50 miles, which did not figure in the BRAC criteria and should raise the level. All those routes are environmentally assessed, with most of them going down to 200 feet. The routes also terminate in training areas. We don't have any noise restrictions. Having a route 50 miles away that you can't use because of restrictions or altitude inefficiencies gives you an inaccurate assessment of the value of that route.

Next one. Proximity of supporting airspace. This one really put us back. We didn't get very much in the way of value on that. Duluth got 43 out of a possible 124 points in the total core mission areas. The airspace available to Duluth for any Air Force mission is exceptional and will support all of the core missions now and in the future of the Air Force.

Again we must question the criteria or the information that was used in reaching these values in Duluth, and we have advantages similar to Grand Forks and Fargo. When you look at the overflights,

we are not overflown.

Next one. This shows the Duluth airspace. The quantity and volume is graphically illustrated here. All the airspaces in yellow are controlled, scheduled by Duluth Air National Guard base. If you take that away, that capability will also probably go away.

Several of these airspaces are low altitude, they go down to 200 feet, and with short notification they can go up to 45,000 feet or higher through Minneapolis center. All these airspaces are environmentally assessed for chaff and flares. They include airspaces over the water and land but give you a full scope of training opportunities, including air-to-air, surface attack, maritime operations and expenditure of live armament in two of these areas. They're also controlled and scheduled by the Duluth Air Guard. Embedded in the Rhineland airspace is also an AR refueling track, which provides multiple opportunities to refuel with the 135s. Also, most of these airspaces are in the backyard of the Duluth unit, within 25 miles from takeoff.

We also have access to the Volk training ranges, which are electronically scored, both

air-to-ground and air-to-air, and also live-fire airplanes, and they're 180 miles away.

Next one. If you look at the Duluth airspaces, the green indicates the Duluth airspace volume. It's larger than Nellis Air Force Base training Air Force space, which is where red flag exercises are held and other major exercises. There may be some differences in altitude but we've got a better airspace than Nellis has in many aspects.

Next one quickly. I won't go into this in great detail, I'm trying to shorten my remarks a bit, but the first bullet discusses the bomber core mission. They evaluated your closeness to training airspace. The bomber mission is a long-range mission. You don't fly B2s out of Whiteman and go to a range 30 miles away or 50 miles away, you fly them to Iraq nonstop. The bomber mission, the core value of the bomber mission, airspace proximity is -- it's nonmeasurable, it should not be considered.

When you look at the fighter mission, and you look at what we're doing in Afghanistan with the Navy carriers off the coast, what we did in the Balkans, and what we're doing in the Iraq, all those missions are multiple refueling missions,

long-range, and so having airspace in your backyard is not important, and the BRAC requirement eliminated all airspace greater than 150 miles away.

Another one that is sort of glaring is the guidance on refueling. If you have airspace that does not start with an AR designator, it cannot be counted in the point value for tankers. I would suspect that we have as many tanker refuelings taking place in non-AR airspace as we do in AR airspace. Any one of those airspaces at Duluth can have a tanker in it, and they often do, so we can conduct a refueling there. So it gives some doubt to the BRAC point value for that.

Our joint forces support -- next slide, Andy -- I don't believe the BRAC information-gathering folks took into account the new \$3 1/2 million Reserve facility which was completed at the Guard base, nor the PMEL organization that supports seven Guard units, two Reserve units, a seven-state area for the Army, and ten Coast Guard vessels. Also the deadline on the BRAC was, I think, 2003 or 2004, and there was major construction that went on at Duluth that was not evaluated.

Next one. The Duluth Air Guard Station, as

the Governor has mentioned, and the Senators, has been considerable. The primary importance of the airspace in Duluth, though, has been identified as a NORAD permanent homeland alert site through approximately 2010. If Duluth closes, all that infrastructure supporting that alert site will have to be turned over to a series of aircrafts that deploy for a month or two months or two weeks who bring in their own unique capabilities with that airplane, and the planned savings is going to be minimal. If you move that alert, air defense alert site to another location, Sioux Falls or wherever, you have to build that capability internally, and so the trade-off in value gets to be questionable.

Next one, Andy. Level of mission encroachment. We've spoken about that at Grand Forks and at Fargo, and as I reviewed the BRAC data, I was surprised by the lower-than-expected ratings for Duluth. We didn't do very well, and so I looked at another base, Base X. I'll call it X Plus 43 because this base had 43 points more in military value, and this base is not losing its aircraft but it's going to get an additional nine aircraft.

Next one. This is X Plus 43. When you measure those against the mission encroachment

rating you're surprising by what the photo tells you. The base is confined in a small area of the airport surrounded by a concrete fence 10 feet high designed to keep the civilians from crossing that line. On the south part of that yellow line is a major highway. There's extremely restricted ability to load missiles and also to support the alert site hidden behind that fence. Let's take a look at the Duluth photo in comparison. This is the Duluth photo, and yet we were rated lower in encroachment points than X Plus 43. We've got room to grow to the east and to the northeast if need be.

Next one. When we look at X Plus 43 again, the apparent difference becomes even closer than, once you look at the photo. In depth, we've got 11 major airlines serving that facility, 85 departures and arrivals, so 175 airline flights. 96,000 general aviation operations per year, along with three major carriers and new 87-acre air cargo park and an executive field within six miles. This is where we're going to bed down more airplanes versus Duluth where we're not impacted by that.

Also we were rated equal to this unit in what they call air traffic control delays. If you look at the level of activity at X Plus 43 and you look

at the level of activity at Duluth with 36, 35,000 GA operations, two daily air cargo operations and 20 airlines operations, you can see that Duluth is a place to put military force structure that you want to have unimpeded access to the airspace. Also, if you pull up the FAA let-down book for this X Plus 43, you'll find 12 paragraphs of noise abatement restrictions, and we're going to put nine more airplanes into an area with noise restrictions. Duluth's noise abatement restrictions are zero.

Also, when you look at the criteria in the BRAC and you lay X 43 down alongside Duluth and you look at all core values, you find that Duluth rates lower than X Plus 43 for a UAV mission, which is really surprising. We're going to put a UAV mission in an area with 96,000 light aircraft operations and all the rest of it that you see there.

Some additional comments on Duluth. Next one. X Plus 43 is a single-mission-capability air defense. If you look at Duluth, they've got a three-mission-capability air defense, air-to-ground with precision weapons, and they also are one of two units carrying special reconnaissance pods, TARS pods that's in use now over in Iraq, so they've demonstrated that capability, and they are showing,

if you're looking at military value, a great deal of points.

Next one, please. Our unit strength. Duluth is measured at 103 percent, and I'm not sure, General Shellito may have to correct me on that, nine in all Air National Guard units. The unit that we're going to put nine additional aircraft into, X Plus 43, is rated this way in the Guard Bureau. "Assigned strength is of a critical nature." You can put whatever kind of mission you want there, but it cannot be supported, and I know the BRAC doesn't take that into account. The cost is going up and you may not have the mission value that you want.

Next one. Duluth summary for us. We think that the airspace and low-level ratings are in error, as I pointed out. We think that there's some skewed data in the BRAC measuring system, most of it probably unintentional based on cold war thinking and requirements. Rotating an airport, an air sovereignty alert system will probably overtax the reduced fighter forces. If we're going to bring those fighter forces down, maintain our current level of capability overseas, and then ask them to go into a rotational basis, we're asking for overtasking, and I would suggest to you that we not

forgot the lessons of 9/11 as far as the alert posture goes. At that time there were seven airplanes on alert and there was a move afoot in the Air Force to take the weapons off those airplanes and have them sit there unarmed. We've proven we need the air sovereignty alert, we've proven the locations, we've proven that we need the weapons, and I submit to you that we ought to retain the ASA site at Duluth. It's a critical part of our homeland defense mission.

Next slide. Thank you for your time and attention. And if anything doesn't raise a few questions on the BRAC data, it's the fact that the metrics and data tell us to put a UAV at Fresno, California versus putting it at Duluth, Minnesota. And if that's what the data tells us, we need to seriously question the data. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. BERGSON: Good afternoon. Doubtless, I will say the eight words you wanted to hear most today, and that is I am the final speaker of the today.

(Laughter.)

Commissioners, thank you for inviting us to testify this morning. My name is Herb Bergson and I

am the Mayor of the City of Duluth, Minnesota. I'm here to speak of what the 148th does for Duluth in a nonmilitary sense and the relationship we enjoy with these fine men and women. The 148th Fighter Wing is the ninth largest employer in Duluth. They have 327 full-time and over 900 part-time employees. For a city of our size, those are important numbers. The 148th has an annual economic impact of approximately \$85.1 million. That includes 300 indirect jobs related to the 148th's work.

An intangible benefit that I experience as mayor is that over the past three years these men and women have contributed more than 15,000 volunteer hours in the surrounding community. That's everything from Little League baseball to Boys and Girls Club to basketball leagues and a lot of things that you don't put a dollar value on.

They work closely with our airport to develop safety plans and exercise for contingencies. They provide crash rescue support to civilian and military aircraft alike. Their explosives ordnance team works with local law enforcement to handle crises that arise across the area, and most importantly they protect the skies over Duluth, the largest freshwater port in the world, and they

provide protection for other municipality areas in Minnesota and across the country.

The 148th sits alone to the northeast of our airport so our residents don't know the meaning of the words jet noise. Instead, jets flying overhead represent the sound of freedom. For 60 years they have also represented the sound of community, of dedication and of great importance to our nation's defense. Ironically, 400 people from the 148th couldn't be here to fight for their own jobs because they're in Iraq fighting themselves.

(Applause.)

We urge you to continue that tradition of excellence at the 148th. I thank you for your time.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: General Klosowski, did you look at the cost savings that are projected for Duluth? For example, earlier with respect to Fargo, General McDonald was saying that if you look at the COBRA data there's no personnel savings, but then if you look more deeply into the Air Force documents they show hundreds of personnel being affected. Do you see a parallel situation?

BRIGADIER GENERAL KLOSOWSKI: I cannot honestly answer that one because I have not looked

at the data. I think General Shellito looked at the data and I'm not familiar with that.

MAJOR GENERAL SHELLITO: Commissioner, the staff at the 148th have investigated that, and the general conclusion is if there is a cost saving, it's basically ineffective or immaterial. It's not a material cost savings based on their analysis.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: General, do you want to answer my question earlier about retention, deployment and availability if your unit is compared to active-duty units? I know, and I'm sure it's been excellent from what is, but I want an ongoing basis, because one of the concerns we hear is that the availability, not necessarily your particular unit or maybe, you know, relating to yours, is that the availability of full-time pilots and full-time maintenance people in active duty, they have a higher utilization rate than they do of Guard and Reserve units who have all the restraints of other employment, family responsibilities, and the fact that we've got a two out of five-year deployment cap.

MAJOR GENERAL LARRY SHELLITO:

Commissioner, yes, what we have found -- and it's

not just the latest, it goes back to pre-9/11 also -- both on the Army and the Air side in the state of Minnesota we have been number one in the country. We can go back, I can go back statistically, on the Army side for sure, because I was the Commander and monitored that on a monthly basis, being number one. Currently on the Army side we're at about 108 percent strength. Retention is very good. The units deployed overseas just coming back, 97 percent of this one unit reenlisted before they came back home. Of course, the bonus helps, too.

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: Before they talked to their families, too, probably.

MAJOR GENERAL SHELLITO: And the other issue is also on the Air side, that the Air Guard in the state of Minnesota has historically been over 100 percent. That 100 percent mark is the minimum standard they have set, I would say, for the last six, eight years. So they have been there. And now they are currently deployed, they are currently in Iraq.

And just to give you an example of the esprit that that Air Force has, the Commander, knowing that his troops would be deploying without him -- because

they're going forward on a rotating-unit basis -- volunteered and just came back from a six-month rotation where he was Commander of the air base at Kirkuk. So they are doing their duty.

We had a ceremony for them, the City of Duluth had over 2,000 people there to send off the 400 that were deploying. The community support, and I think that's -- the one thing that's often hidden here is the community support. It's the intangible. But it's been absolutely phenomenal. And as long as our nation continues to treat them as heroes, which they are, I think we will not have a problem with recruiting or retention.

COMMISSIONER SKINNER: All right, thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Thank you, gentlemen. This concludes the Grand Forks Regional Hearing on the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. I want to thank all the witnesses who testified today, and thank you for the excellent testimony on behalf of both states. You made a lot of ideas here and brought a lot of thoughts to us, and I'll note there's very strong feeling amongst this Commission to protect the Air Guard in this country. I want to also thank all the elected

officials and community members who assisted us during our base visit, in particular Senator Conrad's staff, who did a yeoman's job.

Finally, we would like to thank the citizens of the communities represented here today.

(Interruption.)

COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: I guess that concludes the testimony.

(Applause.)

(Proceedings concluded at 11:56 a.m.)

CERTIFIED

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Elizabeth J. Gangl, a Registered Professional Reporter in the State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages of typewritten material constitutes an accurate verbatim record transcribed from the stenotype notes taken by me of the proceedings aforementioned before the BRAC Commission Regional Hearing on the 23rd day of June 2005, at the time and place specified.

DATED: June 27, 2005

Elizabeth J. Gangl

Registered Professional Reporter