

JOE WILSON
2ND DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP
COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
HOUSE POLICY

DCN: 1985

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COUNTIES:
AIKEN*
ALLEDALE
BARNWELL
BEAUFORT
CALHOUN*
HAMPTON
JASPER
LEXINGTON
ORANGEBURG*
RICHLAND*
(*PARTS OF)
ERIC DELL
CHIEF OF STAFF

June 13, 2005



06152005

Mr. Charles Battaglia
Executive Director
Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Charles,

It was a pleasure to see you recently while you were on Capitol Hill. I enjoyed talking and meeting with you.

It is an honor to represent the people of the Second Congressional District of South Carolina, and I value your input. If I may be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



JOE WILSON
Member of Congress

JW/am

I appreciate your efforts.

MIDLANDS OFFICE:
1700 SUNSET BLVD. (US 378), SUITE 1
WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29169
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 7381
COLUMBIA, SC 29202
(803) 939-0041
FAX: (803) 939-0078

212 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4002
(202) 225-2452
FAX: (202) 225-2455
E-MAIL: joe.wilson@mail.house.gov
WEBSITE: www.house.gov/joewilson

LOWCOUNTRY OFFICE:
903 PORT REPUBLIC STREET
P.O. BOX 1538
BEAUFORT, SC 29901
(843) 521-2530
FAX: (843) 521-2535

The Washington Times

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2005 / PAGE A21

By Joe Wilson

When visiting the Middle East over Memorial Day weekend, I must admit that I did not expect to see a sign for "Big Bob's Truck Stop and Up-Armor Facility" in Balad, Iraq. But again demonstrating the fortitude of the U.S. military, our soldiers established this facility in response to the increasing numbers of roadside bombs used against our convoys. As I toured "Big Bob's," I was overwhelmed by the U.S. military's tremendous ability to recognize a problem, work to find a solution and adapt to the challenges of the global war on terror. A ruthless band of cowardly terrorists are no match for our brave men and women in uniform.

Since September 2003, I've traveled to Iraq four times, and I've witnessed extraordinary progress on each visit. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the father of three sons currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, my connection to Iraq is both professional and personal. In February, my oldest son Alan returned from serving a one-year tour of duty in Iraq with the South Carolina Army National Guard.

After participating in congressional briefings on the global war on terror and receiving daily e-mails from my son Alan about his experiences in Iraq, I recognize the tremendous dedication and patience needed to win this unpredictable war. However, I remain convinced that we are making consistent and significant progress in the global war on terror.

Outsmarting the terrorists Military innovation thwarts insurgents

When I traveled to the Middle East in July 2004, touring the Iraqi Police Training Facility in Amman, Jordan was one of the highlights of my visit. The facility was new, and I was encouraged by the number of Iraqis who courageously volunteered to defend their country and safeguard their democracy. However, I expressed my concerns about whether they had the proper equipment to defeat the mounting insurgency.

Upon return to Iraq, I was pleased to see that the Iraqi Security Forces, led by Gen. David Petraeus, are now a skilled team of soldiers who are better equipped to protect their country and defeat terrorists. Today, seven basic police academies are operational. Together, they train and equip over 3,500 police officers each month. There are now more than 168,000 trained and equipped Iraqi police, soldiers, sailors and airmen. Day by day, Iraqi forces are taking increased responsibility for the security of their country.

Each visit to Iraq reminds me that U.S. soldiers are articulate, capable and dedicated to the cause. During my recent trip, I spoke to an economist who had been serving in Iraq for a year. He extended his tour of duty for five more months after recognizing the tremendous opportunity to serve his country and ensure that Iraq continues down the

path to freedom. His selflessness is one of the many shining examples of men and women who are working so that Iraqis will one day enjoy the freedoms we have as American citizens.

Recently, I've heard critics complain that U.S. leaders are viewing Iraq through rose-colored glasses. Not so. We recognize that the challenges in Iraq are large and often overwhelming. During my most recent visit to Iraq, the Iraqi defense minister spoke of the difficulty in sealing Iraq's borders, and he informed us that most of the terrorists filter in through Syria and Iran. As we fight an asymmetric enemy that can adapt to U.S. technology and tactics, violence will increase at times. However, the skill of the U.S. military and the dedication of the Iraqi people will continue to confront and systematically defeat terrorism.

On June 3, the New York Times reported that 75 percent of Iraqis support the Iraqi government, and that 65 percent of Iraqis believe Iraq is headed in the right direction. The report also noted that Iraqis are providing authorities with far more tips on insurgent activities than even a few months ago. The recent major discovery of an underground bunker that served as a haven for terrorists is yet another example of the Iraqi people working with coalition

forces to defeat the terrorists. After Marine and Iraqi security forces received tips from local citizens, they discovered the bunker, as long as three football fields, divided into rooms that apparently housed terrorists.

In America, some of our smallest freedoms are also some of our most cherished. The people of Iraq are beginning to experience privileges shared by citizens in democracies around the globe. The opportunity to invest money in the stock market, to send their children to school, to cheer their athletes in the Olympics, to fly domestically, to surf the Internet, to read independent news and to complain to their neighbors about their government leaders are all freedoms that are emerging in communities throughout Iraq.

The progress in Iraq is real. Our soldiers and the Iraqi people will continue to defeat the terrorists and establish a flourishing democracy. When I return to the country in the future, I'm certain I'll see more examples of the innovation and determination that exists today at "Bob's Truck Stop."

Rep. Joe Wilson, South Carolina Republican, serves on the House Armed Services Committee. In 2003, he retired from the South Carolina Army National Guard after 31 years of service.



DISTRIBUTED BY U.S. CONGRESSMAN JOE WILSON, SERVING THE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

212 CANNON HOB || WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 || P-(202)225-2452 F-(202)225-2455

E-MAIL: Joe.Wilson@mail.house.gov WEBSITE: <http://joewilson.house.gov>

DISTRICT OFFICES:

MIDLANDS OFFICE

1700 SUNSET BLVD. (U.S. 378), SUITE 1 || WEST COLUMBIA, S.C. 29169
MAILING ADDRESS P.O. BOX 7381 || COLUMBIA, S.C. 29202
P-(803)939-0041 F-(803)939-0078

LOWCOUNTRY OFFICE

603 PORT REPUBLIC STREET || P.O. BOX 1538 || BEAUFORT, S.C. 29901
P-(843)521-2530 F-(843)521-2535



TOLL FREE 1-888-381-1442



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

201 WEST KALAMAZOO AVENUE • KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49007-3777
PHONE: (269) 384-8111
FAX: (269) 384-8032



06152005

June 10, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi, Chair
2005 Defense Base Closure & Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Principi:

This letter represents the full and unqualified support of the Kalamazoo County Michigan Board of Commissioners in opposition of the proposed realignment of the 110th Fighter Wing and closure of the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. Kalamazoo County, like our neighboring Calhoun County to the East has historically been strong supporters of the defense of our nation.

Since early in the last century Kalamazoo County gave up thousands of acres of land to the military as they prepared to fight the conflicts of the last century. Kalamazoo County joins with Battle Creek and Calhoun County to proudly play its role in the war on terrorism.

The Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has recommended a list of military facilities be closed and/or realigned which included the 110th Fighter Wing as part of the BRAC process. Kalamazoo County believes that there must have been some type of mis-interpretation in the evaluation criteria that resulted in the 110th even appearing on the BRAC list.

As we understand the criteria Military Value, Military Essentiality and Military Readiness were highly valued with taxpayer cost, being relevant, but not as highly valued. To state the obvious, the Federal Government has invested over \$37 million dollars into the Battle Creek Air National Guard base in the last decade to make it the most state-of-the-art A-10 maintenance and support facility in America. The unique and specialized facilities are not realignable and therefore they will

need to be recreated at whatever facility the A-10's ultimately call home, at great costs.

There is not an A-10 squadron in the National Guard in this country that is more combat ready than the 110th. They have been activated and served with distinction in Operation Noble Eagle, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. During two deployments in 2004 alone, a total of 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 14 Bronze Stars were awarded to members of the 110th. If military readiness is valued by the Defense Department the 110th cannot fulfill its mission for several years if it is realigned. Many of the 932 full- and part-time National Guard members will not be transferred to the 110th's proposed new home because there are already military personnel there that have first option in servicing these unique aircraft. However those individuals are not qualified in the service, maintenance and operation of A-10's. It will take years and millions of dollars to regain the razor sharp efficiency and skill in the A-10's that exist in Battle Creek. Military readiness is priceless in this time of terrorist threats.

Kalamazoo County implores the BRAC Commission to carefully examine the military value, readiness and cost effectiveness of the Pentagon recommendation to realign the 110th Fighter Wing. Kalamazoo County believes the value of the 110th Fighter Wing is clear and compelling. We ask this for the good of the Air Force readiness, the national defense, the Southwest Michigan community and especially for the 932 Guards men and women who have so proudly served every time they have been ask and with great distinction.

Sincerely,



Robert Brink, Chair

Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners

c: Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Governor
Honorable Carl Levin
Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Honorable Fred Upton
Honorable Joe J.H. Schwartz, M.D.