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June 13, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Principi,

I am writing regarding the proposal to realign the Missile Defense Agency out of current Government and commercially-leased offices and to re-locate various parts of the agency across six different states. During the last seventeen years, I served as a senior executive in the Department of Defense's missile defense organizations -- starting with the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization on to the current Missile Defense Agency. During my tenure, I worked for every Director including the current one. I served as the agency's Executive Director for the last six years, culminating in my retirement from Federal Service in December 2004

During this time, one of the most fundamental goals was to integrate all the individual Military Service programs into a single layered system. I firmly believe that only a Washington-based organization could effectively implement all the aspects of this challenging mission. Early efforts were severely hampered by limited resources, Service cultures and competition, and most formidably by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. But the missile defense organizations made what progress they could and tried to forge jointness into the program. With the advent of the Bush Administration these problems were worked from the top down and each one overcome with the result that a limited initial capability has now been put in place to defend the country from ballistic missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction.

It is critical that focus remain on testing this capability, integrating it more fully and evolving it into a layered defense to meet the ever advancing threat. The Department of Defense's proposal to the Commission and the MDA Reengineering will disrupt, delay and incur considerable costs at the worst time for this program. Therefore I offer the attached paper for your consideration. Both BRAC and the MDA reengineering efforts have valid motivations but mission success must be put first where failure would be catastrophic to our nation.

Sincerely,



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Missile Defense, BRAC and Common Sense

The Department of Defense has kicked off the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process with its recommendation on 63 major military facilities for realignment, closure and consolidation. Amidst the sound and fury of the initial round of base realignment and closure announcements, a little noticed and potentially more significant move has been proposed.

The Missile Defense Agency – a joint organization chartered to develop and acquire missile defense systems against missiles of all ranges – is slated to be carved up and moved out of both Government and leased offices in Northern Virginia. Under current plans a small Washington Headquarters staff would move to Fort Belvoir, Virginia with several thousands of the remaining government and contractor program management and technical staff proposed to move to Huntsville, Alabama; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts; Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico; and Los Angeles Air Force Base, California. The “geographic center of gravity” for missile defense will shift from the Washington, DC area and be widely dispersed. The greatest concentration will migrate to Huntsville, the home of U.S. Army missile defense expertise.

Of all the Department’s BRAC recommendations, none is likely to hold as vast or immediate an impact on actual *national security* than the move of MDA.

Ostensibly, this is proposed in the name of security and economic efficiency. The plan recommends moving MDA outside the “beltway” and out of leased commercial offices that do not comply with the Defense Department’s new, post-September 11th facility security requirements. In addition, the Department claims this move would save taxpayers \$359 million over 20 years.

On the surface, the security issue sounds prudent. MDA currently sits atop a hill overlooking the Pentagon in a facility historically known as the Navy Annex. My office overlooked the side of the Pentagon that was struck by the airliner flown by the September 11th terrorists. That jet flew over the Navy Annex before crashing into the Pentagon. Many of our

employees saw the impact. Many more volunteered in the minutes, hours and days following to help in the rescue and recovery efforts. All of us were reminded each day as we watched the reconstruction of what we once thought was unassailable. MDA employees know firsthand the issue of security in the age of terrorism.

The effort to move MDA outside the beltway may make sense. The effort to widely disperse the agency simply does not.

The prospect of obtaining economic efficiencies by moving MDA sounds good. In reality this move is “penny wise and pound foolish.” New buildings will need to be built to house the agency in six different states. Without a central location, more travel by Government and industry staff will be required. Upfront infrastructure costs will increase as each facility will need its own security and operations staff and resources. Add to this the cost of building and operating an elaborate enterprise information management system to foster a collaborative work environment across the multiple facilities. Today this is a considerable challenge even with greater centralization in the D.C. area. The simple “cost of doing business” with more agency staff and its industry partners geographically dispersed will be higher than currently anticipated. Finally, \$359 million in projected savings over 20 years is about \$18 million a year. An agency with an annual budget of about \$8 billion could certainly deliver similar efficiencies without such a disruptive move.

Beyond these straight-forward costs, however, lay the real mission impacts. Consider the near-term priorities for MDA:

- MDA must complete the development and fielding of Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) with great confidence and reliability. MDA needs to demonstrate as soon as practical that GMD is ready and able to defend the Nation when needed.
- MDA must complete the development and fielding of the AEGIS BMD system with confidence and reliability. MDA needs to focus on keeping this very successful program moving forward. Potential efforts to move the ABMD team – or its missile-specific work

– outside the Washington area will greatly delay fielding the system or degrade its capabilities.

- MDA needs to demonstrate the technical capabilities of the remaining systems – such as the Army’s THAAD, the Air Force’s Airborne Laser, and initiate the development of KEI and other advanced systems – and integrate them into the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS).
- MDA needs to remain focused on joint missile defenses and deliver the best capabilities to the joint warfighter. In spite of the proposed BRAC moves and agency reorganization, MDA must maintain its joint-service perspective. That has been an unstated value of MDA operating in the Washington, DC area where all three Services can participate equally in the development of effective missile defenses. No single location outside the DC metropolitan area can offer this level of “jointness.” Years of effort to forge integration, instill “jointness” and reach consensus on developing a single ballistic missile defense system will be set back or eliminated.

MDA needs to focus on these important priorities now – while North Korea continues to threaten its neighbors – as well as the United States. MDA needs to field these systems effectively and reliably before other nations, such as Iran and others, can threaten our forces, our friends and our homeland. We need to effectively close any window of vulnerability.

In light of this, the Department of Defense must ensure that MDA – its leadership, civilian and military workforce, and industry partners – remains focused on the mission at hand. The agency must focus on achieving excellence in everything that it does in order to deliver the best possible capabilities to the joint warfighter.

The Department’s proposed BRAC-inspired moves are simply wrong – both in timing and effect. Even if the agency does not move until the 2008 to 2009 timeframe, the impact on people and the agency will be immediate. During the next three years – the time when the integrated BMDS system should be deployed in its initial spirals using ground- and sea-based defenses – MDA’s leadership and workforce will be distracted by the prospect of uprooting itself and moving. This is greatly exacerbated by plans to disperse the agency and its people to

geographically separate locations. This distribution of the missile defense program will only make the goal of a single integrated BMDS more difficult to achieve. The loss of the people who weathered previous efforts to render the program ineffective will cause delays, distractions, schedule setbacks and incur large cost penalties not likely to be included in the BRAC calculations.

The ability to coordinate, communicate and focus on executing critical missile defense programs will naturally be undermined as people focus on their own "here and now" issues of whether or not they move or take new jobs. Typically, only a small fraction of the workforce moves following a BRAC decision. MDA's current leadership will soon find that the best and brightest will quickly find other jobs in the Northern Virginia area. Those equally good who are eligible to retire will leave even though they would prefer to continue to fight for missile defense and contribute their talents to such a worthy endeavor. The impact will be immediate and profound upon the agency and its execution of the mission.

The ability of MDA's leadership to stay focused on the real mission will be undermined when they cannot effectively coordinate a program that is managed and executed in six different states with a diminished and diluted team of experts. Those cities and bases where MDA is slated to move neither have – *nor are they likely to attract* – the large, qualified and experienced technical workforce required to successfully implement this mission. The idea of centrally managing the agency and the program in this environment will be a farce. Now overlay the reality that missile defense is considered the most complex weapons system ever attempted by the Department of Defense.

The impact on national security will be real, immediate and potentially disastrous.

Rear Admiral Wayne Meyer, the architect of the U.S. Navy's Aegis weapon system, has often noted that, "The system reflects the organization that built it." An organization that is effectively led, coherently organized, populated with quality people at all levels and strongly focused on execution is more likely to develop and field effective weapons systems. Unfortunately, the converse is true as well.

If the Admiral's sage advice rings true, then we must ask ourselves, what would a missile defense system built by such a perversely organized and managed agency look like? How could such a structure execute the program and build the world's most complex system in an effective and integrated manner?

Clearly, there is a better way to balance the valid requirements of the BRAC, MDA's organization and funding challenges, and the stable execution of this important program. At the end of the day, the priority is and should be the effective defense of our homeland, military forces and friends and allies.

In any organization or endeavor, fundamentally, success comes down to the people who do the work. The fate of any program rests in their hands. I have had the privilege to occupy missile defense leadership positions dating back to the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization. I know the quality, dedication, technical competence and tireless sacrifice of these wonderful people. I have seen their creativity come to life. I have witnessed their tenacity as they confronted and overcame great technical challenges. I know them for their personal and professional integrity in the face of unfair and unrelenting criticisms that today seem to be an all-too common element of political debate. These people are committed to defending the American People – *their families and their friends* – against the threat of attack. Their dedication to service deserves that we reciprocate – that our leaders lead. This means giving them the tools to do their jobs more effectively – including an organization that makes sense, clear direction focused on building an integrated system that works, and support when they need it most.

As the BRAC Commission considers the myriad of facilities and bases recommended for realignment or closure, it must pay special attention to the proposed disposition of the Missile Defense Agency. The Commission must evaluate the merits of this plan and weigh the physical security and economic issues in balance with the national security challenge – *the likely impact this will have on MDA's ability to effectively implement its mission and field those systems that can and must defend us in times of national emergency.*

Failure to do what is right, *right now*, may very well result in our nation remaining largely defenseless against existing and emerging threats from missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Robert Snyder retired from Federal Service in December 2004. He served as the Executive Director of the Missile Defense Agency from 1998 to 2004. In this capacity, he was the agency's senior civilian and oversaw the major staff functions of the agency. During his Federal Service career, Mr. Snyder was awarded the Department of Defense Distinguished Civilian Service Award (the highest award given by the Secretary of Defense to career employees) and the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award.