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REPRESENTATIVE MIKE KELLY HOUSE DISTRICT 7

Member
House Finance Committee

Hon. Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202



June 16, 2005

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RE: Eielson AFB Realignment Recommendations

Chairman Principi:

First, let me offer you and your fellow commissioners my sincerest thanks for your presence and consideration during yesterday's hearing. Your concern and careful deliberation impressed us all.

I believe our presenters clearly stated the most compelling strategic arguments for continuing Eielson's full time contribution to our country's first line of defense, especially in the face of new "asymmetrical" threats throughout the world. Clearly, our proximity to the major population centers of the northern hemisphere will remain useful and vital in the years ahead.

The strategic reasons for maintaining Eielson on "full-ready" are rightfully the greatest concern to the Department of Defense and BRAC Commission, but you've learned from our presenters that the economic reasons are also unique and critical from the perspective of our Interior Legislative Delegation and Interior Alaskans.

Gen. Mark Hamilton stated that the methods and calculations by the Air Force used to justify Eielson's strategic realignment are questionable and should rightly be revisited. Senator Gary Wilken said regarding the economic hit we could expect from base realignment, that Fairbanks is a community built by it's bases and it will take our delicately balanced economy a generation to recover.

Please carefully consider the information you have received. I sincerely believe that it will lead you to a decision to remove Eielson from the BRAC list.

Thank you for your time and may God bless and guide you in the serious task ahead.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to read "Mike".

Rep. Mike Kelly (R-District 7)
Chair, Interior Delegation