

ORIGINAL

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

May 26, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

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Dear Secretary Principi:

I am writing regarding the recommendation to move the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) from its current headquarters facilities in Bethesda. I am committed to keeping NGA in Maryland. The Bethesda site has served the nation as a center of excellence in intelligence imagery since 1946, when it housed the Army Mapping Service. For 60 years, this facility has been home to some of America's most vital intelligence assets, including the many talented, hardworking men and women who serve our intelligence community.

We know that you must now evaluate the Bethesda facilities to determine whether they continue to serve as an appropriate home to NGA. If this evaluation confirms the BRAC recommendation to move NGA from its current site, I strongly recommend that NGA be consolidated at Ft. Meade in Maryland. I am concerned that the proposed plan to put NGA at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia represents a substantial deviation from the force structure plan and the selection criteria.

I believe that the choice of Ft. Belvoir over Ft. Meade to house a consolidated NGA was made in a vacuum, without consideration of the impact of other BRAC decisions and without consideration of the significant infrastructure upgrades being implemented at Ft. Meade. For example, I believe this decision would have been substantially different if it had been taken in the context of BRAC recommendations that would move 18,000 new employees to Ft. Belvoir.

The reality is, NGA can establish itself faster, more securely and with less disruption to its mission at Ft. Meade than at Ft. Belvoir.

- Ft. Meade is unquestionably one of the most secure military facilities in the National Capital Region.
- It is highly secure against the most likely threat from high explosives.
- Since NGA's mission is closely related to that of Ft. Meade's major tenant, the National Security Agency (NSA), co-location will facilitate necessary interaction between the two agencies.

- Ft. Meade has space available today to accommodate the roughly 2,000 NGA employees who must be relocated from the Washington Navy Yard, and we believe it could build out quickly to accept the remainder of NGA's workforce within the target time frame.
- Ft. Meade has completed or is completing substantial infrastructure upgrades, which would allow NGA to "plug in" quickly at Ft. Meade, including: privatizing the power supply and the water and waste facilities, and laying fiber for enhanced communications.

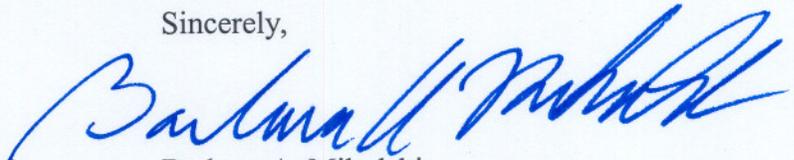
In sum, I believe that Ft. Meade's secure, superior facilities make it better suited than Ft. Belvoir to accommodate the special needs of a high-tech intelligence facility.

There are some in the intelligence community who will argue that NGA must not be consolidated at Ft. Meade, because the co-location of NGA and NSA would present a highly-attractive, high-risk target for terrorism. Nobody takes threats to U.S. intelligence assets more seriously than I do. I would lead the charge in opposition if I believed that co-locating NGA and NSA would endanger either agency.

The truth is, the entire BRAC process is an exercise in co-location. Whether NGA shares real estate with NSA at Ft. Meade, or with other important defense agencies at Ft. Belvoir, our primary responsibility must be to place this high-value intelligence asset in the most secure, self-contained facility available. These are some of the reasons I believe that Ft. Meade is uniquely suited to meet NGA's security and infrastructure requirements. I look forward to a dialogue about these and related issues as the process goes forward.

In closing, I want to thank you for your consideration of my concern that NGA should be moved to Ft. Meade. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Celes Hughes of my staff (224-7881) if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator