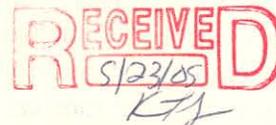


DCN: 1110

Charles A. Orem
284 High Head Road,
Harpswell, Maine 04079

May 20, 2005

Anthony J. Principi
BRAC Commission
Polk Building
Suites 600 and 625
2521 South Clark St.
Arlington, VA 22202



Dear Mr. Principi,

I am surprised and shocked that the DOD has placed Naval Air Station, Brunswick, on its list of bases for realignment. Our country is in the midst of a global war on terrorism. September 11, 2001 provides a chilling warning that we cannot permit our defenses to be diminished without exposing our country to the unimaginable horror of another such invasion of our borders and our sovereignty.

Since its establishment in WWII, NASB has been a cornerstone of surveillance and "first alert" capability for our country. While we are now, admittedly past the time when its original anti-submarine function was the primary duty of the Navy squadrons based at NASB, we are definitely not beyond the time when the protection afforded by those surveillance aircraft can, and likely will, be critical in the anti-terrorism defense of our country.

NAS Brunswick is the only active duty Department of Defense airfield remaining in the Northeastern United States. Its strategic location adjacent to routes for ships and aircraft coming from Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East make it a vital link in our homeland defense, surveillance and security strategies. Brunswick was a key base for homeland defense during the months following September 2001, providing surveillance and land-based combat air patrol for navy ships at sea. NASB aircraft provide a highly capable surveillance umbrella for the major population centers of the Northeast. The Base can support every aircraft in the Department of Defense inventory and is a preferred re-fueling stop for tactical jet and turboprop aircraft crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Significantly for force protection, NASB is the only airfield in the region that provides a completely secured perimeter for military operations. It supplies approach and departure paths over adjacent open ocean, which are optimal for flight security as well as the safe conduct of operations involving live weapons.

Redeployment of the NASB squadrons to Jacksonville will leave a yawning gap in our East Coast homeland defense capabilities.

In addition to the vital strategic functions performed by the NAS Brunswick squadrons, there is an economic value for the important facility. Maine's third largest employer, NASB employs 5,227 military and civilian personnel, who include 573 officers, 3837 enlisted personnel, and 817 civilians. This translates to \$147 million in salaries for military & civilian employees, \$62 million in military construction contracts and material purchases, and \$34 million in medical purchases. In all, NASB contributed over \$243 million to the regional economy in fiscal year 2004. For example, in the 2003 fiscal year, the Brunswick School system received over \$800,000 as a result of having 643 military dependent children in its school system. The local community also benefits in other ways including home sales, retail sales, increased local business patronage, and increased local tax payments. The proposed DOD realignment would eliminate 2317 military and 61 civilian jobs.

I respectfully urge you and your fellow commissioners to seriously review the Navy rationale for realignment of Naval Air Station, Brunswick. I feel confident that you will find serious deficiencies in that rationale and will conclude that the Navy recommendation for realignment is not appropriate.

Sincerely,

