

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2002

June 16, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Department of Defense's (DOD) Base Realignment and Closure recommendations with respect to consolidating the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) and the Research, Development and Acquisition and Testing and Evaluation of C4ISR technologies and systems at Aberdeen Proving Ground. We also support the further consolidation of defense assets including DISA, JTF-GNO, and various Combatant Commander Development and Acquisition activities at Fort Meade. In our judgment, these consolidations will not only help improve the mission effectiveness of our armed forces and enhance national security, but help reduce cost through the synergies created at Aberdeen Proving Ground and Fort Meade, making more funds available to better outfit and train our Nation's military personnel.

Our Congressional delegation, along with our state and local elected officials, have worked hard over the years to support and sustain these military installations and to ensure that the men and women – military and civilian – who serve at these facilities, and their families, can enjoy a quality of life that is second to none. We have established collaborative partnerships between these installations, the communities in which they are located, our State's premier schools and higher educational institutions, and our businesses to build positive and sustained military-community relations. We have invested substantial sums of money in improving the schools, child care facilities, transportation infrastructure and housing opportunities in and around the Aberdeen Proving Ground and Fort Meade campuses to meet the needs of the defense community. We would urge the Commission to visit these facilities to see first-hand the capabilities and opportunities they have to offer and stand ready to work with the Commission and DOD to ensure a smooth transition of these new operations into Maryland.

We do, however, have concerns about two of the Department's recommendations – the proposals to relocate the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the National Guard's C-130Js from Maryland. Given the State's infrastructure and the intelligence assets already in place, we believe that the NGA should remain in Maryland.

There are several locations within the State, including Fort Meade, that would provide excellent security and also allow NGA to remain nearby the National Security Agency, which shares a related mission. Additionally, we have concerns about the Department's recommendation to relocate the C-130Js of the 135th Airlift Group to California and Rhode Island. Maryland's C-130Js are the only tactical airlift asset to support security contingencies and homeland defense in the National Capital Region. For this reason, we would urge the Commission to consider retaining these aircraft in close proximity to Washington, DC.

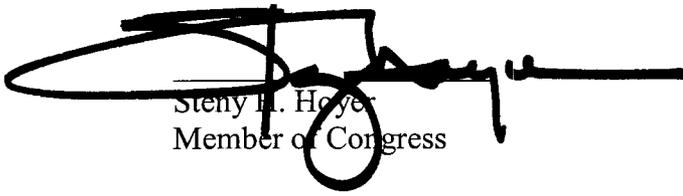
With best regards,



Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Benjamin L. Cardin
Member of Congress



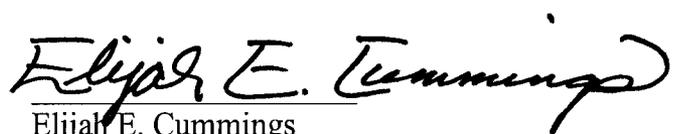
Wayne T. Gilchrest
Member of Congress



Roscoe G. Bartlett
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Elijah E. Cummings
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C.A. Dutch Ruppberger
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