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CHAIRMAN

May 2, 2005

CONGRESSMAN ROB SIMMONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

The Honorable Anthony Principi
BRAC Commission
Polk Building, Suites 600 and 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

all comm.

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5-25-05 JR

Dear Secretary Principi:

Darryl!

I would like to bring to your attention the enclosed report of the Northeast-Midwest Institute, "Base Closings and Military Presence in the Northeast-Midwest: The Nation's Unguarded Region." The report highlights the terrorism hazard of additional base closures in the Northeast-Midwest region of the United States. I urge you to duly consider the military value of bases to homeland security as you prepare your Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations to the president.

Over the last four rounds of base closings, the Northeast-Midwest region has sustained deep personnel and infrastructure reductions that have created a military void in the nation's region most vulnerable to terrorism. Although it holds almost 40 percent of the nation's population and accounts for more than 40 percent of its annual economic output, the Northeast-Midwest region has just ten percent of the U.S.-based active duty military personnel. Population centers and industrial hubs, we know, are the most likely target of future terrorist attacks.

Since 1987, the Northeast-Midwest has lost 41 percent of its active duty military compared with just 21 percent for the rest of the country. Additional cuts in the region would further erode our military's ability to respond to terrorist attacks. Lessons from the April 2005 "TOPOFF 3" exercise, which simulated terrorist incidents originating in New London, Connecticut - home of Submarine Base New London - indicate the homeland security value of proximate military facilities.

The BRAC 2005 criteria require you to weigh heavily the military value of bases considered for closure and realignment. As a Subcommittee Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee and a Vice Subcommittee Chairman on the Armed Services Committee, I frequently consider the value of bases to the security of the urban, industrialized Northeast-Midwest region in this age of catastrophic terrorism. I urge you to do the same as you execute your BRAC responsibilities.

All the best

Thanks for listening.

Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

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