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TO: Chairman Principi

FAX: 703.699.2735

FROM: Senator Specter

DATE: 8/30/05

BRAC Commission

AUG 29 2005

Received

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 30, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi,

As you and your fellow Commissioners finish your recommendations on the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment round and draft a report, we respectfully request that you include language (attached) in your report directing the Secretary to use all available A-10 aircraft and provide A-10 aircraft to the 111th Fighter Wing.

The BRAC Commission's recommendation has left the 111th FW with no aircraft. We believe the Commission's recommendation to move from six wings of ANG A-10 units flying fifteen aircraft to four wings, three flying 18 aircraft and one flying 24 aircraft, is flawed. Additionally, we deem the decision to retire eighteen A-10 aircraft at this time to be premature.

As recognized by Admiral Gehman during the Commission's deliberations, Willow Grove was a successful experiment in joint training. The 111th benefited from this opportunity and as a result it is the best example of joint service operations and training of any ANG A-10 unit. Furthermore, the 111th FW has the highest military value, highest average manning over the past several years, the lowest average cost, the most ramp and hanger space and the shortest training range distance of its' ANG A-10 counterparts.

The 111th has proven an invaluable asset to the Department of Defense. They have been deployed three times in the last four years with 75 percent of the unit having been deployed to Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. It is unwise to take away flying assets from a unit that is so experienced and has so much to offer Combatant Commanders.

Under the current proposal, four of the six ANG A-10 wings will suffer deactivation, downsizing, or relocation, causing the loss of the vast majority of their personnel. The total A-10 flying experience in the ANG community will fall by over half within a two year window and the combat experience gained from recent campaigns may never be regained. Estimates suggest that 3,200 of the 6,000 ANG A-10 personnel will be lost in the next four years. Over this period, it is estimated that 66% of the highly-experienced A-10 ANG personnel will vanish.

The creation of new ANG A-10 wings will overwhelm the Air Force's ability to train these new A-10 pilots for several years. The BRAC recommendation would leave a total of 78 A-10 aircraft, 42 of which (or 54% of the A-10 ANG fleet) will be at bases that do not fly the A-10. The Air Force training program has been at maximum capacity for the last few years. The Air Force is barely keeping pace with hiring to balance year-to-year losses to retirement. The ability to support the anticipated influx of new students presents a clear problem not only to the ability to train, but also the length of time that will be required to complete this training.

There will be considerable costs associated with retraining pilots at other installations to fly the A-10. For example, two of the receiving units currently fly F-16s. It will cost an estimated \$12 million to retrain these squadrons to perform the A-10 mission. More importantly, the 111th FW's invaluable war-time experience, which does not have a dollar amount and cannot be replicated or taught, will be lost.

We believe maintaining five wings of A-10 aircraft in the Air National Guard will better serve the efforts in the current war against terrorism and will support the war fighting and training needs of Combatant Commanders well into the future.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We admire your dedication and leadership during your tenure as Chairman and reiterate our appreciation for your service, past and present, to our nation.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter
United States Senate



Rick Santorum
United States Senate

Draft Report Language to accompany the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommendations concerning Navy Recommendation 21: Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove, PA, and Cambria Regional Airport, Johnstown, PA (Chapter II, Item 68):

“The Commission recommends that the Department of Defense not retire service-capable A-10 aircraft and that DOD take action to provide A-10 aircraft to form a fifth A-10 wing using the 111th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard located at Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.”

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

August 29, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

As you and your fellow Commissioners begin the process of drafting a report to accompany the "Bill to Make Recommendations to the President Under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990," we write to encourage you to include specific language in the report with regard to the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station (ARS). Specifically, the language would recommend the Department of Defense (DoD) take action to allocate aircraft to the 911th Airlift Wing to support the Regional Joint Readiness Center (RJRC) and to ensure the unit has the ability to recruit and train effectively.

As you are aware, in its vote on Air Force Recommendation 35, Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, and Yeager Air Guard Station, West Virginia, the BRAC Commission voted to strike the text of paragraph "d" of Chapter III, Section 103 of the bill and insert in its place:

"Realign Pittsburgh International Airport (IAP) Air Reserve Station (ARS), Pennsylvania. Establish a contiguous enclave at the Pittsburgh International Air Station (ARS), Pennsylvania sufficient to support continued operations of the reserve station units, including flight operations, and compatible with combined use of the civilian airport by the Air Reserve, Air National Guard and civilian users. Within the enclave, establish a Regional Joint Readiness Center (RJRC) at the Pittsburgh International Air Station with the mission of providing civil-military operations, homeland security and community-based medical support to the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security National Incident Management Plan and the National Response Plan. The enclave and RJRC will be staffed at the current manning level of the ARS. The PAA and personnel allocations of Air National Guard units at Pittsburgh are unaffected by this recommendation."

As you may know, Mr. George Bernier of Senator Santorum's staff spoke with Charlie Battaglia, Executive Director of the BRAC Commission, and submitted to him draft report language to accompany the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment

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Commission recommendations concerning Air Force Recommendation 35. For your benefit, we have enclosed a copy of the draft report language that Senator Santorum's staff submitted to Mr. Battaglia on August 27, 2005.

While we appreciate the BRAC Commission's vote to realign Pittsburgh ARS rather than close the installation, we believe that it is necessary to permanently locate and operate an optimum number of C-130H, or equivalent aircraft, as a detachment to the Pittsburgh ARS enclave to support the mission of the Regional Joint Readiness Center. In addition, these planes are essential in the recruiting and training of aircrews and maintenance personnel and are required to carry out the recommendation for the 911th Airlift Wing to perform community-based medical support for the Department of Defense. Furthermore, these aircraft will play a critical role in supporting civil-military operations with the Department of Homeland Security such as the National Incident Management Plan and the National Response plan.

We strongly urge the BRAC Commission to adopt this language in its report to accompany the bill. We appreciate your kind consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Rick Santorum
United States Senate



Arlen Specter
United States Senate

Enclosure

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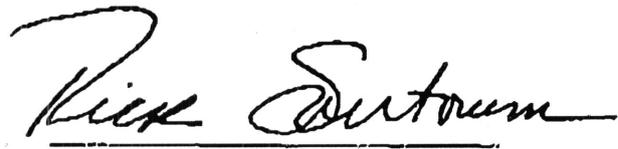
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To: Charles Battaglia, Executive Director
From: George Bernier, Office of the Honorable Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA)
RE: 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission & Enclave-Regional Joint Readiness Center
Date: August 27, 2005

Draft Report Language to accompany 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommendations concerning Air Force Recommendation 35, Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina; Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania; and Yeager Air Guard Station, West Virginia, appearing at Chapter III, section 103 of the Bill:

"The Commission recommends that DOD take affirmative action to permanently locate and operate an optimum number of C-130H (or equivalent) aircraft as a detachment to the Pittsburgh ARS enclave to support the mission of the Joint Readiness Center as well as current AFRC missions.

"By establishment of this detachment, significant resources for recruitment and training of aircrews and maintenance personnel will be saved."



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