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NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

ONE MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NORTHWEST • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001 • (202) 789-0031 • FAX (202) 682-9358

June 10, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

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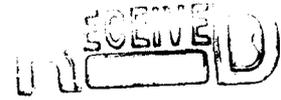
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force to anywhere approaching an equivalent level of performance. I am certain you will hear more on this subject as you continue your visits in the field.

I would like to share a few thoughts, as well, on flying safety. NGAUS has been blessed for many years to have Brig. Gen. (ret) William (Bill) Spruance, a founding member of the Delaware Air Guard, as a resident advocate for flying safety. General Spruance is acknowledged throughout the Air Force for his dedication to promoting flying safety throughout an Army, Air Force and Air National Guard career that began in 1939.

General Spruance has compiled a ten-year recap of flying safety data comparing the records of the Air National Guard and the active Air Force based on inputs from the HQ Air Force Safety Center. In the category of fighter aircraft (A-10, F-15, and F-16) the number of active duty AF Class A flying mishaps per 100,000 flying hours is eight times greater than that of the ANG. In the airlift category (C-130) the rate of active duty Class A mishaps is 16 times greater than in the ANG. General Spruance is known for his blunt assessment of issues. In his words, ".....so why would we want to put extremely expensive machinery completely in the hands of people who break things"?

While my earlier comments are but two critical factors, NGAUS takes the position that reducing flying missions in the Air National Guard merits reassessment now, with a view to increasing their operational role in improved or new weapons systems, particularly the F-22 and the F-35. At a minimum, the negative impact of the "right-sizing" aspect of the Air Force plan should be subjected to further scrutiny. Our people have the edge in flying experience and safety. Most importantly, when called they have and will respond with ready units.

We stand ready to assist you and your colleagues in your important assignment.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Koper
Brigadier General (ret)
President

✓ Cc: Commission members