

June 17, 2005

**TERRE HAUTE
TOMORROW**
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Mr. Anthony Principi, Chair
2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

For over fifty years, Terre Haute has been home to the Indiana Air National Guard's 181st Fighter Wing. Therefore, we are deeply disappointed by the Air Force's recommendation to move F-16s currently assigned to the 181st Fighter Wing to Fort Wayne since the local Air Guard unit has a long and distinguished history of flying fighter aircraft in support of combat operations around the world.

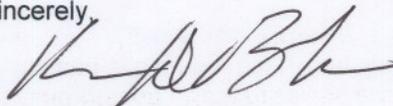
However, we realize that there may be some efficiency gains by consolidating all of Indiana's F-16 operations at one location in Indiana and that older F-16s are quickly becoming legacy aircraft as the Air Force transitions into its new role as an air and space force.

We express our support and optimism that the Air Force will select the 181st for the Predator mission and as the Midwest location for a Distributed Common Ground Station. Both missions are critical, viable and relevant to national and homeland security needs. In addition, Terre Haute's proximity to Camp Atterbury, Muscatatuck Urban Warfare Training Center, and Jefferson Proving Grounds also provides the opportunity for efficient joint training operations providing value and cost benefit to the Department of Defense.

Finally, we strongly encourage the commission to recommend that any movement of aircraft or personnel be delayed until the Air Force releases a detailed realignment and remissioning plan. To move forward without this type of business plan would impact the ability of the 181st to retain and recruit personnel, which adversely affects combat readiness.

This letter is being submitted on behalf of the business, community, labor, and government leaders that makeup this organization.

Sincerely,



Kevin D. Burke, Mayor
City of Terre Haute

Cc: Admiral Harold Gehman (USN, Ret.)
General Sue Ellen Turner (USAF, Ret.)
Honorable James Hansen



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