

Testimony of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton  
BRAC Commission Regional Hearing  
Buffalo, NY  
June 27, 2005

Members of the Commission, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of the communities in New York that have been adversely impacted by the Department of Defense's base closing recommendations.

At this time in our nation's history, with our men and women in uniform fighting for freedom overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, the choices and decisions about where our forces should be based in the U.S. are particularly important. The stakes are incredibly high for communities impacted by base closing, for the future of our military, and for the national security of our nation.

The Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, process specifically established the Commission to allow an independent examination of the Defense Department's recommendations. I intend to focus my testimony on three New York installations that have been recommended for closure or realignment by the Department of Defense: the Niagara Falls Joint Air Reserve Station, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) facility in Rome, NY and the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome, NY. I believe that if you examine these installations closely and scrutinize the Defense Department's data closely for errors, you will find that it does a real disservice to our national security and the well-being of our men and women in uniform to close either the Niagara Falls Air Station or the Rome DFAS facility. Furthermore, to avoid the loss of critical synergies, the Sensors Directorate at the Rome Air Force Research Laboratory should not be realigned.

As my colleagues have described, New York has a strong military tradition going back to the Revolutionary War. And among all states, New York is fourth in the number of servicemen and women deployed in support of our operations in Iraq. New York took some very difficult hits in prior base closing rounds, losing its only two active duty Air Force bases and an Army depot. New Yorkers are proud of their men and women in uniform and the closure of any military installation in NY would leave a gaping hole in the local communities.

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And indeed, we can see some of the negative consequences of the Air Force and DOD's decision to rebalance its airlift force structure in its recommendation to close Niagara Falls. The Air Force recommendation to close Niagara would move the planes, but not the people. But as I can attest through first hand experience, the 914<sup>th</sup>'s pilots are among the most proficient in the night vision goggles in the entire Air Force.

I had the opportunity to see their expertise first hand when a C-130 crew from the 914<sup>th</sup> flew me out of Baghdad to Kuwait using night vision goggles during my first trip to Iraq in November 2003. And indeed their skills are in such high demand that the 914<sup>th</sup> has already served two tours in Iraq and is scheduled for a third tour this fall. While the Air Force might argue that they can train new pilots in night vision goggles, they will not be able to replace the years of experience and proficiency of the 914<sup>th</sup>. Our men and women serving in combat zones deserve to have the best crews flying them in and out of dangerous situations at night and we should not give up the expertise that resides in the 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift wing.

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**THE ARSENAL BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP  
JUNE 27, 2005  
TESTIMONY  
BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE COMMISSION  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK**

**HARRY ROBINSON, CHAIRMAN  
TONY GAETANO, PRESIDENT**

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JUNE 27, 2005  
TESTIMONY  
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