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BRAC Commissi



AUG 17 2005

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To: Chairman Principi From: Senator Coleman
 Fax: 703 699 2735 Date: 8/17/05
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NORM COLEMAN
MINNESOTA DCM 7663

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2307

August 17, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Secretary Principi:

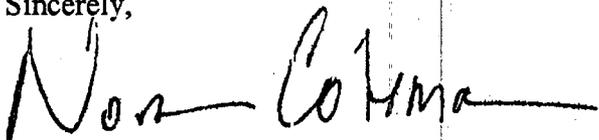
I write to express my support for the position of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS) with respect to the Department of Defense BRAC recommendations for the Air National Guard.

As you know, AGAUS is not opposed to the BRAC process. It is, however, opposed to the use of the BRAC process to provide "cover" for what amounts to programmatic actions. I too am opposed to this misuse of the BRAC law which we in Congress created.

In the specific case of Minnesota, I am well aware that the Duluth-based 148th Fighter Wing's Block 25 F-16's may need to be retired during the next decade because of their advanced age. Obviously, I believe the 148th should receive a viable follow-on mission, and expect General Blum and General James to fulfill the commitment they have made to me in ensuring such a flying mission for the future. After all, modern infrastructure, past operational performance, and recruiting/retention successes have combined to make the 148th one of the premier Air National Guard organizations in the country, and it would be irresponsible to squander this resource. However, all of these issues and considerations are unmistakably programmatic, and should not fall under the auspices of BRAC.

As you begin your final deliberations, I urge you to favorably consider the AGAUS position. The Department's programmatic recommendations should be removed from the Commission's final list.

Sincerely,



Norm Coleman
United States Senate

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