

## Niagara River Bi-National Mayors Coalition

June 27, 2005

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

**RE: *Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base***

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

The Niagara River Bi-National Border Mayors' Coalition represents all the major communities that share the Niagara River, including Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls (New York) and Lewiston.

This group of municipal executives formed a coalition several years ago to jointly address issues with cross-border effects while promoting each of their respective community's interests as part of a regionally shared interest and identity. It should be of no surprise that primary among those interests is economic stability.

Given the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base is such a large portion of the regional economy, and given that a significant percentage of our regional industries are either bi-national, export-dependant or both, the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard base is disconcerting, not only for the US communities, but for the sister communities of the Region of Niagara, Ontario, Canada.

The Coalition of Mayors finds it hard to understand why the US Air Force has decided to take planes, missions and jobs away from the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base removing that particular mission away from an extremely high-profile international shared-border region when that decision implies that the same missions and jobs will be carried out at more costly Active Duty bases.

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**Buffalo Fort Erie Niagara Falls,NY Niagara Falls,ON Lewiston Niagara-on-the-Lake**

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The Coalition of Mayors understands that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission is required to make its final recommendations based on multiple criteria, military value and national security being prime among them. However, economic factors can also have a bearing in evaluating the continuance of military operations in one facility over another. Given that the Niagara River Region is geographically an isthmus situated between two Great Lakes, one of the busiest trade corridors connecting USA and Canadian economies, and home to one largest hydro-electric installations in North America, it is simply counter-intuitive for the Defense Department to remove the existing USA military presence from the Niagara Region.

For the reasons stated above and more thoroughly presented at the regional public hearing held in Buffalo on Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, the Niagara River Bi-National Border Mayors' Coalition urges the Commission to remove the Niagara Falls AFB from the Pentagon's recommended list of base closures, to protect the economic and regional economies from further retrenchment, and to stop the continuing retreat of the military from this extremely important shared-border region.

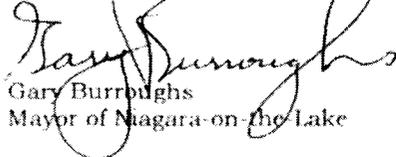
Sincerely,



Wayne H. Redekop  
Mayor of Fort Erie



Ted Salci  
Mayor of Niagara Falls (Ontario)



Gary Burroughs  
Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake



Anthony M. Masiello  
Mayor of Buffalo



Vincenzo V. Anello  
Mayor of Niagara Falls (New York)



Richard Soluri  
Mayor of Village of Lewiston

**Niagara River Bi-National Mayors' Coalition**

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