JULY 22, 2005

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI
BRAC

NONE OF THE DISCUSSIONS YOU
AND YOUR COMMISSIONERS HAVE
HAD WITH MONTANA'S REPRESENTA-
TIVES (SENATOR BAUCUS, BURNS
AND GENERAL MOSLEY, OTHERS)
HAVE ADDRESSED THE NOISE AND
SAFETY ISSUES MENTIONED IN
MY LETTER OF JUNE 24, 2005,
SO I SUGGEST THAT YOU ASK
THEM:

[Signature]

[Name]

DCN: 5795
June 24, 2005

Anthony Principi  
Chairman  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC)  
Department of Defense  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I live near the Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, runway and can attest to the fact that moving the obsolete fleet of F-16 jets from the Great Falls International Airport to Malmstrom in lieu of sending to bases in Iowa and Alabama as recommended by the Pentagon is a totally unacceptable solution to those of us who would have to deal with this decision and have our lives ruined by the noise and unsafe conditions the F-16 jets would present using Malmstrom's runway. Malmstrom's runway is probably built anywhere from 3 to 5 miles to close to the residences and businesses in East Great Falls and base housing units and work facilities located near the perimeter of the runway now, and as a result we must bear the brunt of the noise the F-16 jets would emit during take off and landing as well as face the probabilities of an errant jet with an inflight emergency crashing on or in the immediate area of our homes, work places and schools or in the midst of the city. We can't allow ourselves to get into a position where this could happen!

Furthermore, the F-16 jets will do the same things the KC 135s did before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) closed Malmstrom's runway in 1995 which includes emitting
outrageous noises caused by weather inversions and poor acoustics partly because of the valley we are in - a public nuisance if I ever seen one - that brought about house shakings, sheetrock and masonry mortar cracks, window glass and wall decoration movements which made our lives a living hell, yet the Air Force always denied responsibility when called on the carpet for their actions by irrate citizens who could not get the state, county or the city to do anything about the noisy KC-135s. Now that the KC-135s are gone, we must contend with the every present low flying, noise making, two-engine Huey helicopters piloted by officers with absolutely no respect for our serenity - these people need a job!!! Contrary to the briefings you and your fellow commissioners received in Portland, Oregon, on Friday, June 17, 2005, to keep Air Guard F-16 jets flying in Great Falls from Montana's Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns as well as Adjutant General Randy Mosley, the flying conditions out of the international airport and from Malmstrom's runway are far from ideal because of the weather inversions and poor acoustics I mentioned earlier, other problems exist such as snow, ice, fog, cross winds and wind shears in addition to the fact commercial developers are attempting to sell land off Highway 87/89/200 that extends to an area in the direct flight path of incoming and outgoing F-16 jets using Malmstrom's runway. (See the area I have marked in yellow on the city map of Great Falls. Also
see the areas I have marked in yellow on the city map to show where I live and the base housing units and work facilities near the perimeter of Malmstrom's runway.)

Before BRAC closed Malmstrom's runway in 1995 there were isolated incidents of Canadian and American aircraft hotdogging, doing touch and gos and other unsafe stunts that the Air Force condoned that put everyone's life on the ground and in the air at risk. This could happen again if the F-16s are allowed to use Malmstrom's runway!!! The FAA does not control Malmstrom.

Senator Conrad Burns was notified of these noise problems and the structural damages they could cause when I sent him a letter on August 25, 1998 about my concerns with locating the X-33 at Malmstrom, a project Lockheed Martin later abandoned. I also notified the then Secretary of Defense (William Cohen) in the same letter. Burns is in denial and has chosen to ignore the fact that the Malmstrom runway should never be reopened unless it is completely rebuilt moving it 3 to 5 miles further Northeast closing down the present one entirely. To do otherwise - allow a flying mission or to move the F-16 jets from the international airport to Malmstrom - would bring about the same noise problems and unsafe conditions that existed when the KC-135s used the runway prior to BRAC closure in 1995. The Great Falls International Airport has a potpourri of noises.
June 24, 2005

and unsafe conditions that are similar to Malmstrom's so neither runway should be considered for a flying mission.

Chairman Principi the ball is in your court, but may I suggest that you contact the Pentagon to find out the real reason the 1995 BRAC closed Malmstrom's runway, if they will inform you, and proceed from there. Good Luck!

Respectfully Yours,

Darold L. Bennett

cc: Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
Pentagon
Washington DC 20330

Enclosures: 1/Great Falls City Map with Malmstrom AFB and Runway.

2/Great Falls Tribune Article "Montana makes case to keep MANG," Saturday, June 18, 2005.

Note: This letter was originally addressed as follows: Anthony Principi, Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission, Department of Defense, Pentagon, Washington, DC 20330. It was sent by USPS Certified Mail Return Receipt Requested on June 25, 2005 to this address, but was not delivered and it came back to me on July 22, 2005.
Montana makes case to keep MANG

Delegates pack punch into 30-minute presentation, answer commission questions

Senior Montana officials made a strong case Friday in Portland that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission should keep Air Guard F-16 jets flying in Great Falls.

"I give a double thumbs up to Sen. Max Baucus, Sen. Conrad Burns and Montana Adjutant General Randy Mosley," said Mayor Randy Gray. "They only had 30 minutes to speak, so they coordinated their comments and all did just superb jobs."

The Montana representatives asked four BRAC commissioners to overturn the Pentagon's May 13 recommendation that six of the Montana Air National Guard's fighter jets be moved to Air National Guard bases in Iowa and Alabama. While the other nine be retired from service.

The Pentagon said that would mean a loss of 107 jobs, but MANG officials have said pulling their primary mission could result in the loss of as many as 500 jobs. MANG provides about 1,000 jobs, of which 350 are full-time.

The Montana delegates and a handful of Great Falls supporters in the audience were particularly pleased at the question that BRAC Commissioner Phillip Coyle of California asked just as they wrapped up their case, nine seconds short of their 30-minute deadline.

Coyle, a former assistant secretary of defense, asked about the compatibility of shifting a flying mission from the Air National Guard at the airport to Malmstrom Air Force Base.

The trio of Montana officials readily agreed that it could work, noting that Malmstrom has a large, modern runway and hangars that were closed after it lost its aerial refueling tankers in the mid-1990s.

"It was just one commissioner's question, but we all agreed it could be a major opening," Baucus said later. "It gives us the opportunity to meet individually with BRAC members and their staffs to help find a way to reopen Malmstrom's runway and maybe keep a MANG flying mission."
BRAC: Vulnerability, air space part of discussion

FROM 1A

Bums quipped. "We have become lobbyists," Burns quipped.

Boss hopes the commission will look at the "big nine ing individual meetings with the its concerns, but that he, Burns and their staffs would keep seeking individual meetings with the nine BRAC commissioners and their staff.

"We have become lobbyists," Burns quipped. Burns aide Mike Brown said his boss hopes the commission will look at the "big picture." Since Malmstrom's primary mission, operating land-based nuclear missiles, is expected to continue for at least 15 years, the military might as well transfer in a flying mission and make use of Malmstrom's 1,500-foot runway, too, he said.

"The commission's question was a huge first step in keeping a flying mission for MANG and reopening the Malmstrom runway," agreed Cynthia Schultz, director of the Great Falls International Airport.

With the Pentagon's stated goal of combining related flying missions, such as fighters, bombers and tankers, at the same facility, it even could lead to additional flying missions, she said.

Schultz pointed out that the Pentagon targeted MANG because it lacked such ground-based assets as large fuel storage, which are easier for a military base to provide than a civilian airport. Schultz said Thursday's news that the Homeland Security Department could open a Northern Border Air Wing in Great Falls by next year also should boost the chances of maintaining MANG's fighter wing to support the border protection.

Baucus said the four commissioners present listened attentive ly. He sensed that they were sympathetic, "probably because they have been hearing the same story from other delegations across the country. He said fighters at MANG and other Air Guard sites would be eliminated before sufficient newer, more expensive jets are available, leaving the country vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

"Burns highlighted benefits that Montana offers for air training missions, including congested airfields and huge training space. Mosley, who holds a dual state and federal role, agreed, saying if Montana's air training space were placed over Florida, it would cover much of the state.

Montana's space is even better than small air training spaces in urban parts of the country in which training crews almost have to maneuver more to land and take off than they do in the actual combat training, he added.

Realigning F-16s from MANG and other states would hinder protection of the northern border and make it harder to retain and attract top Air Guard personnel in Great Falls, he said.

Reach Tribune Staff Writer Peter Johnson at (406) 791-1476 or pjohnson@greatfallstribune.com.