Dear distinguished members of the BRAC Commission:

I know you have had a rough summer with the job put before you. I have watched you on C-SPAN. I was very respectful of the way you handled each bases situation.

I once again would like to ask you to please give consideration for the 188th Air Refueling Wing at Sewart Air National Guard Base in Tennessee. We feel they were rated incorrectly on the BRAC list.

These people passed all their inspections with the highest marks.

We are a training center with excellent air space day and night maintained. We are in close proximity to the capital.

Our firefighting training center was one of the best in the U.S. It has been used...
More than the other year
in the last year. They
Can simulate any combustible
Agent to train the firefighters
in smoke conditions, fireman's
safety, whereas, the other only
were prepared.

Hopefully, in September
the last of our troops
will be home from Iraq.
They have not only took
care on homeland security
but gave the freedom to
the Iraq people.

Please make it a happy
homecoming.

Please keep our unit flying.
We can do the task.

Thank you for your attention
to this matter, we appreciate
your efforts, on-site visits
and telephone calls.

God bless you and sustain
you during this time. We are
counting on you.

Brenda Gabbard
1521 North 43rd, Ft Smith, AR 72904
Dear Sirs,

This little unneeded base and the jobs you need to cut back me through the recession. This little part-time job continues to feed me because the training I received led me to civilian jobs usually closed to women, as was my military position. I stepped up. Training I received throughout my career gave me the confidence to accomplish all I set my mind to because we were taught "No Excuses."

I have no personal affection for the F-16 that belonged to the F-4's, but I do have affection, respect, admiration, pride and a need for this base to continue. Do not close us. Give us another mission. We are not ignorant sinners - we have accomplished better rates than most of the sequences and we did not do it with older equipment. That's because we work hard. You may get quick returns from the regulars but you get long lasting skills from this training. Our troops come from Texas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, all over to belong to the 887th F-W. And when we gather we bring an unbelievable payload of experience, intelligence and skills from our varied "real jobs." And we do it as we teach others. Even in the lowest regarded jobs of ours in weapons we produced about ten officers in the last ten years. We have business owners, corporate supervisors from Walmart and Safeway, nurses, therapists, paramedics, cops and teachers to name a few. And we bring all that information and those skills with us to complete our mission. We don't do it for the money - but if we lose alot of money doing our duty. And we do it voluntarily - and we do it until our bodies break down or our age forces us out.

We also can't be stupid as to believe that if you cut the jobs related to the planes that there will be any need for those jobs left intact. As at any base half the personnel are blue collar - the other half are white collar. The white collar's job is to care for the blue collar's needs. You cut the blue collar you've eliminated the need for the white collar as well. That's the past that, so far, the media has failed to notice.
Arkansas has a nuclear power plant. I'd rather not wait for Texas or Tulsa (where radar failed to pick up an F4 tornado that killed three people and millions of dollars & damage to our city a few years ago) to rescue us in case of a terrorist attack. Of course we could get Little Rock's C-130s to fly over and back luggage out to protect us.

You sure feel we were viable after 9-11. Shortly after 8pm that night hundreds of people I worked with heard the same sounds I heard. Panic, fear, and uncertainty covered their faces as that noise broke through the silence that had held for much of that day. All breathed a sigh of relief and gratitude when I told them that our F-16s had begun their new mission. They knew they were being protected. And that 24-7 protection lasted till you told us to return to our normal mission.

If you continue to have the recruiting problems the manuals are explaining how we would you work so hard to further cut the numbers in uniform? And if we are so "insulated" why is the same still true in Iraq now? The military involvement in this war is staggering considering we were designed to stop up and take the places of those regulars deployed. They are the ones whose families get base housing, C.E. deep in housed equipment, Janines, dental and medical provided. The regulars get those perks because they are expected the gone. We don't get them, and yet we are going. And yet we are told we are not needed? Do you not see the front line irony in all this?

Let me tell you, my troops have volunteered and gone to Israel, Arabia, Turkey - you name it - we're gone. Usually we receive even more to the service. They have to go - the best of volunteers fill the spaces available. That's what we are - that's what we do. We accomplish whatever you need us to do.

So far pity's sake give us a viable mission. Do not let IB your service needs by effectively killing the careers of hundreds of people who sacrifice time and time again to make this work, work, work, it won't work if it's only half as good.

The security service runs into more in abroad, but it's...
Do not cut the strongest arm you've got - your volunteers.

Respectfully,

Kitty J. Holohan  MSGT, Ret.
188th FW AR ANG
H. Smith AR