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2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2005

RUSHMORE PLAZA CIVIC CENTER

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

PARTICIPATING STATES:

SOUTH DAKOTA AND WYOMING

COMMISSIONERS:

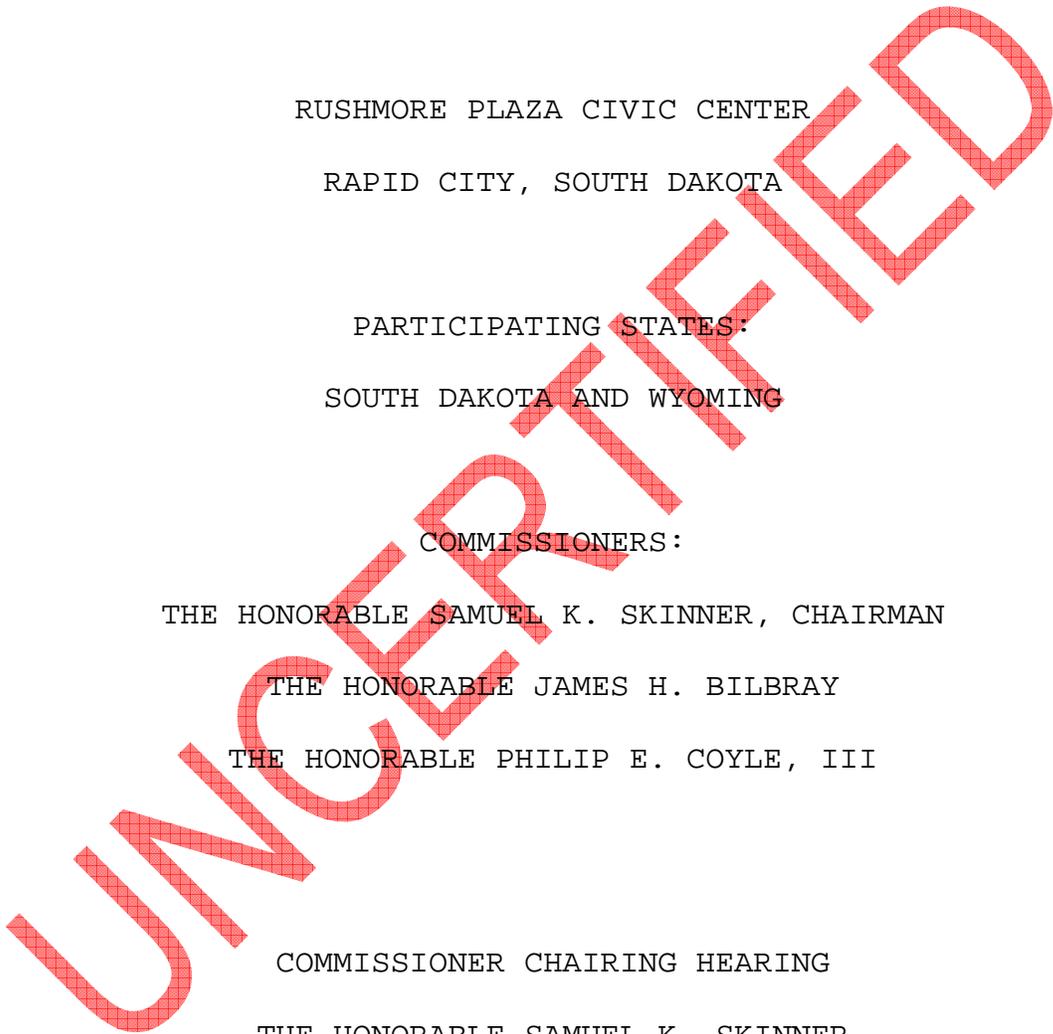
THE HONORABLE SAMUEL K. SKINNER, CHAIRMAN

THE HONORABLE JAMES H. BILBRAY

THE HONORABLE PHILIP E. COYLE, III

COMMISSIONER CHAIRING HEARING

THE HONORABLE SAMUEL K. SKINNER



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WITNESSES:

Colonel Jim McKeon, USAF (Retired)

General John Michael Loh, USAF (Retired)

Lieutenant General Thad Wolfe, USAF (Retired)

Colonel Pat McElgunn, USAF (Retired)

Jim Shaw, Rapid City Mayor

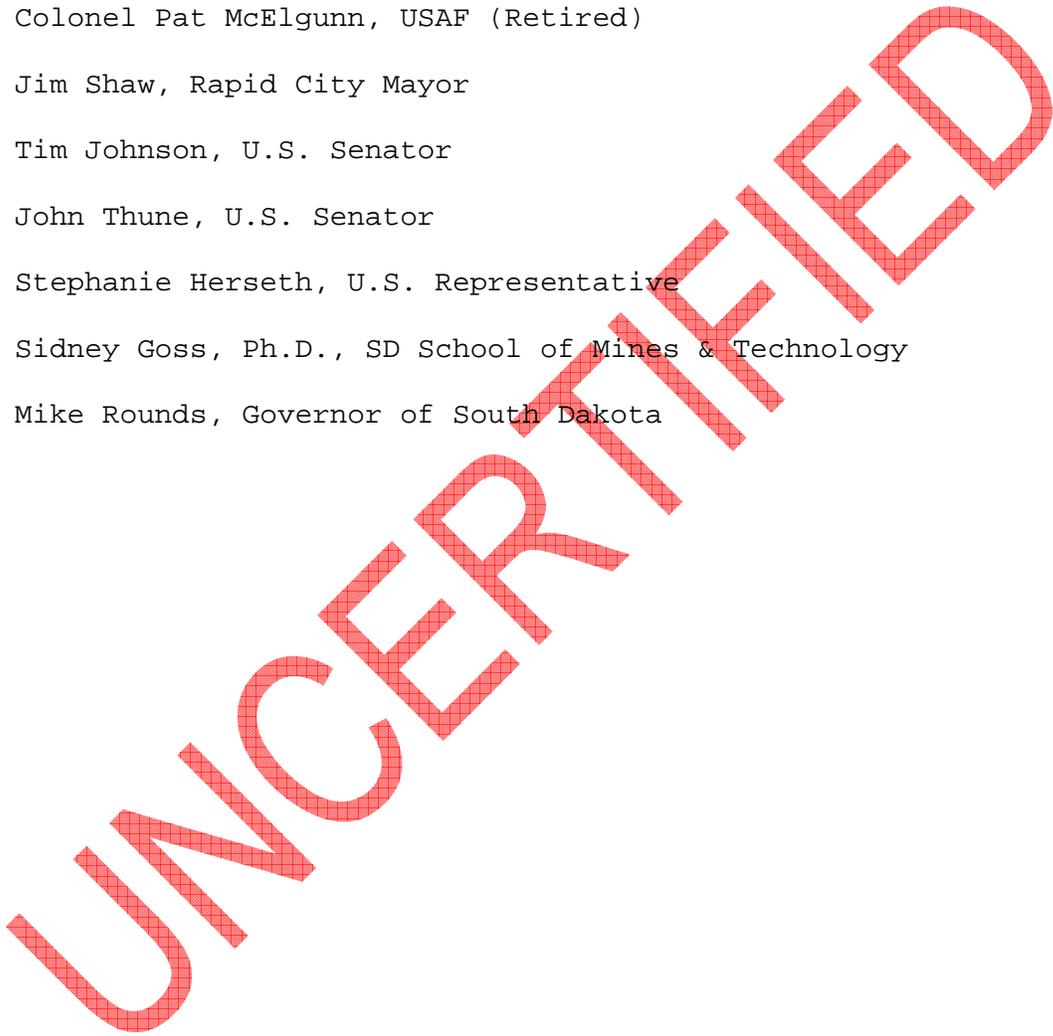
Tim Johnson, U.S. Senator

John Thune, U.S. Senator

Stephanie Herseth, U.S. Representative

Sidney Goss, Ph.D., SD School of Mines & Technology

Mike Rounds, Governor of South Dakota



1 COLONEL MCKEON: Ladies and gentlemen, the  
2 Commissioners from the Base Realignment and Closure  
3 Commission.

4 Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for  
5 welcoming the commissioners from the Base Realignment and  
6 Closure Commission. Commissioners, you've just met the  
7 people from South Dakota.

8 (Applause.)

9 COLONEL MCKEON: Now it is my pleasure to  
10 introduce to you the Shrine of Democracy Chorus, which will  
11 sing our National Anthem.

12 (Shriners sing The National Anthem.)

13 COLONEL MCKEON: It is now my pleasure to  
14 introduce the Chairman of the Realignment Commission, Mr.  
15 Skinner, and he will make opening remarks at this time.

16 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Thank you very much, Jim.  
17 Ladies and gentlemen, the ladies and gentlemen  
18 and children and families from South Dakota, and maybe a  
19 few from Wyoming as well, thank you very much for coming  
20 out and giving the Commission such a warm welcome. It was  
21 really very inspiring. Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Having seen the wonderful,  
24 wonderful fellowship here in South Dakota, I don't  
25 understand why they call it the Badlands. It appears to be

1 the good land, so thank you very much. I am Samuel Skinner  
2 and I'm Chairperson for the regional hearing of the Defense  
3 Base Closure and Realignment. I'm also pleased to be  
4 joined by my fellow Commissioners, Congressman Jim Bilbray  
5 on my right and your left, and on my left, Philip Coyle,  
6 who will be joining me for today's session.

7 As this Commission observed in its first hearing,  
8 every dollar consumed in redundant, unnecessary, obsolete,  
9 inappropriately designed or located infrastructure is a  
10 dollar not available to provide the training that would  
11 save the marine's life, provide the munitions to when the  
12 soldiers fire fight, or fund advances that could ensure  
13 continued dominance of the air or the seas or on the land.

14 The Congress entrusts our armed forces with vast  
15 but not unlimited resources. We have a responsibility to  
16 our nation and to the men and women who bring the Army,  
17 Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps to life to demand the best  
18 possible use of these resources. Congress recognized that  
19 fact when it authorized the Defense Department to prepare a  
20 proposal to realign or close domestic bases. However, that  
21 authorization was not a blank check.

22 The members of this Commission accepted this  
23 challenge and necessity of providing an independent and  
24 fair and equitable assessment and evaluation of the Defense  
25 Department's proposals and the data and methodology used to

1 develop that proposal. We committed to the Congress, to  
2 the President, to the American people that our  
3 deliberations and decisions will be open and transparent,  
4 and that our decision will be based on the criteria set  
5 forth in the enabling statute.

6 We continue to examine the proposed  
7 recommendations set forth by the Secretary of Defense on  
8 May 13th, and measure them against the criteria for the  
9 military value set forth in the law, especially the need  
10 for search/manage and homeland security. But be reassured  
11 we're not conducting this review as an exercise in sterile  
12 cost accounting. This Commission is committed to  
13 conducting a clear-eyed reality check that we know will not  
14 only shape our military capabilities for decades to come,  
15 but will also have profound effect on our communities and  
16 the people who bring our communities to life.

17 We're also committed that our deliberations and  
18 decisions will be devoid of politics, and the people and  
19 communities affected by the BRAC proposals would have  
20 through our site visits and public hearings a chance to  
21 provide us with direct input on the substance of the  
22 proposals and the methodology and substance behind it.

23 I would now like to take the opportunity to thank  
24 thousands of involved citizens throughout this country,  
25 especially those in this room, who have already contacted

1 the Commission or supported the Commission's effort, and  
2 shared their thoughts with us and their concerns and their  
3 suggestions about the Defense Department proposals.

4 Unfortunately, the volume of correspondence we received  
5 makes it impossible for us to respond to each and every  
6 communication. But we want you to know that we received  
7 it, we appreciate it, and we're doing everything we can to  
8 read and evaluate every one of them. We want you to know  
9 that the public input we received is not only appreciated  
10 and taken into consideration, but everybody in this room  
11 will not have an opportunity to speak, and every piece of  
12 correspondence will be made part of the record as  
13 appropriate.

14 Today we will hear testimony from the states of  
15 South Dakota and Wyoming. Each state's elected delegation  
16 has been allotted a block of time determined by the overall  
17 impact that the Department of Defense Closure and  
18 Realignment recommendation -- on their states. The  
19 delegation members have worked closely with their  
20 communities to develop agendas that I'm certain will  
21 provide information and insight that will make up a  
22 valuable part of our review. We would greatly appreciate  
23 if you would adhere to our time limits. Every voice today  
24 is important.

25 Let me make a personal observation to all of you

1 here. This morning the Commission had the chance to visit  
2 Ellsworth Air Force Base, and it, with all of your elected  
3 officials, the Governor, your two senators and your elected  
4 Congresswoman, and I can assure you that it is, as you well  
5 know, duly impressive. These men and women are doing an  
6 outstanding job in the service of our country. It was  
7 demonstrated today by --

8 (Applause.)

9 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: This afternoon we will be  
10 taking testimony and written information from them on what  
11 we call a certified basis, which is necessary under the  
12 BRAC statute. As part of that process, all witnesses,  
13 including the Secretary of Defense, was required to stand,  
14 and was asked to stand and be administered the oath  
15 required by the Base Closure and Realignment Statute, and  
16 the oath will be administered by Dan Cowhig, the  
17 Commission's designated federal officer for administering  
18 oaths. So I think at this time we can have them all that  
19 are going to testify stand as one, and take that oath and  
20 we won't have to duplicate it.

21 (Witnesses sworn by Mr. Daniel Cowhig, Deputy  
22 General Counsel.)

23 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: All right. The, I think the  
24 first, Jim, I think the introductory testimony and the  
25 quality video is probably the first thing on the schedule.

1 Jim, as many of you know is head of the Chamber  
2 of Commerce here in the business community, but he is also  
3 a retired Colonel in the United States Air Force, so we  
4 thank you both for your service not only in the Air Force,  
5 but what you're doing afterwards, so thank you very much.

6 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Chairman Skinner.

7 (Applause.)

8 COLONEL MCKEON: Okay. I thank you for the  
9 applause, but now our two hour block begins, so I don't  
10 want to hear from your again until the end.

11 (Laughter.)

12 COLONEL MCKEON: Okay. Chairman Skinner,  
13 Commissioner Bilbray and Commissioner Coyle, I am Jim  
14 McKeon, President and CEO of the Rapid City Area Chamber of  
15 Commerce, and a member of the Ellsworth Task Force. On  
16 behalf of South Dakota, I welcome you to the Black Hills of  
17 South Dakota and the home of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

18 Before we begin, we would like to express our  
19 sincerest appreciation for accepting the monumental task  
20 placed before you. We know it will challenge your  
21 endurance and skills as credentialed public servants, but  
22 as you go through the remainder of the summer and find you  
23 are asking yourself not only what town am I waking up in,  
24 but why did I not listen to that little voice that  
25 cautioned me about what I was getting into, know that we

1       admire you for your service to our country.

2               It is our pleasure to meet and address you today.  
3       You have seen Ellsworth firsthand, a modern platform from  
4       which the bomber of choice in our ongoing Global War on  
5       Terror engages our presence -- , are presented to you. We  
6       believe you likewise share our sense of frustration with  
7       the presentation of such unnecessary challenges to our  
8       community, such as for the matters, and same as for the  
9       matters of the Commission. The last several weeks have  
10      been like working with a kaleidoscope of ever emerging  
11      pictures. While such may be an amusing adventure in some  
12      circumstances, we have found it to be inconsistent with the  
13      gravity of the national security decisions being made in  
14      this process. As late as last Friday, data was being  
15      released, and as such, we sincerely believe that your offer  
16      to communities to be able to present new information to you  
17      over the next several weeks will help to compensate for the  
18      Department's actions.

19      Here to open our message is a former commander of  
20      the Air Combat Command, General Mike Loh. General Loh is  
21      an Air Force visionary, who told us when Ellsworth became  
22      an Air Combat Command base in the 1990s that the Air Force  
23      will need Ellsworth, a base with great expanses of open  
24      skies and uncongested airspace into 2020 and beyond, but  
25      the Air Force needs the vision to get it there. I would

1 offer that nothing could be more appropriate to you today  
2 as you decide whether Ellsworth will be here in 2020 and  
3 beyond.

4 Although General Loh was unable to join us in  
5 person due to a medical condition, he has provided this  
6 video for us. A copy of his written testimony along with  
7 his sworn affirmation is being provided for your  
8 consideration.

9 Commissioners, General Loh.

10 Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Don't do that. I  
11 screwed up. I'm sorry. Play the other video first. This  
12 tells us a little about our community. My apologies to the  
13 Commission. It was taking too long. I knew they were  
14 probably trying to fumble.

15 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: We won't hold this time  
16 against you, Jim.

17 VIDEO NARRATION: We live in a land called South  
18 Dakota. Flyover country to some. To others, the last  
19 region of this great country to be met. A land of natural  
20 wonders. Native American heritage and rich, western  
21 history. A place where men carve mountains, and the stars  
22 and stripes and the eagles still fly. Through world wars  
23 and a history of conflict, they heeded the call of a  
24 nation, born from the simple premise that all are created  
25 equal, and that each shares unalienable rights worth

1 defending at home and abroad.

2 From the beaches of Normandy and the jungles of  
3 Vietnam to today's War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and  
4 Iraq, South Dakotans have long served their country and  
5 still do so today surrounded by neighbors who welcome them  
6 home from their service, and in times of tragedy who never  
7 forget. For well over half a century, the Black Hills  
8 community, this place of proud patriots, have supported  
9 Ellsworth Air Force Base and welcomed the airmen and women  
10 into their hearts and into their homes.

11 In return for this enduring relationship, the  
12 Ellsworth community has served the United States Military  
13 with distinction, fulfilling evolving missions, hosting the  
14 latest in technological advances, and in times of shared  
15 tragedy such as a devastating Rapid City flood that claimed  
16 238 lives in 1972. Ellsworth personnel provided needed  
17 assistance in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

18 For so many reasons, which will be explored here  
19 today, the great state of South Dakota greeted with sadness  
20 the Secretary of Defense's recommended closure of Ellsworth  
21 Air Force Base, an economic linchpin in America's outback.  
22 Today the people of the Black Hills are the power of this  
23 land, undeterred by setback, confident in their future, and  
24 resilient in the cause of freedom and democracy.

25 Many things may be said as the days turn to weeks

1 and the months turn to the years ahead, but it will not be  
2 said that South Dakotans have shirked their duty or shied  
3 away from the hard choices that befall those who dare  
4 greatness and who celebrate that which is best in America.

5 And so it is in South Dakota, where Ellsworth  
6 stands as a sentinel on the plains with a worldwide reach  
7 capable of defending our nation's borders while  
8 simultaneously generating awesome firepower in any  
9 international theater of war.

10 It is said that those who ignore history are  
11 destined to repeat it. On that fateful day in December  
12 1941, America learned firsthand the error of concentrating  
13 its defense forces in one place. With tens of millions of  
14 dollars invested in infrastructure improvement in the past  
15 decade and the minimal prospect of residential or  
16 commercial encroachment, Ellsworth is uniquely positioned  
17 to play an ongoing role in our nation's defense.

18 As South Dakota's second largest employer,  
19 Ellsworth Air Force Base has a 65-year history of  
20 supporting joint missions capabilities and multiple  
21 aircraft weapon systems including bombers, tankers, command  
22 and control, jet trainer, helicopters, and ground and  
23 flight training.

24 Since 1942, nearby Rapid City has provided  
25 unparalleled quality of life to the base's military

1 members, civilian employees, and their families who named  
2 Rapid City one of the nation's Military Communities of  
3 Excellence. Ellsworth's 11,183 military, dependent and  
4 civilian employees constitute 18 percent of Rapid City's  
5 population, creating an annual economic impact of \$278  
6 million. However, our grandchildren will not measure the  
7 legacy of this BRAC Commission in dollars and cents.

8 Generations unborn will gauge what we do here today and  
9 what you decide tomorrow by discerning their own security.

10 In that evaluation, Ellsworth Air Force Base makes good  
11 sense and sound security.

12 For three generations, Ellsworth has served our  
13 nation. For nearly half its history of statehood, South  
14 Dakotans have been proud to play a role in America's  
15 defense. Today, the thousands of Black Hills residents  
16 gathered here in this great hall and the thousands more who  
17 could not be with us share a love of freedom and the faith  
18 that this Commission will have the insight to not approve  
19 the Secretary's recommendation to close Ellsworth Air Force  
20 Base, and they stand ready to exert their energies in  
21 reaffirming their love for country and home and friend. We  
22 live in a land called South Dakota.

23 (End of video.)

24 COLONEL MCKEON: Hopefully, hopefully your brief  
25 visit to the base and discussions with its airmen and

1 civilians accurately depicted that it began its  
2 transformation and modernization long before the concepts  
3 became widely accepted. And as a community so long tied to  
4 the defense of our nation, I am sure that the audience  
5 assembled here, although adamantly opposed to your approval  
6 of the Secretary of Defense's recommendation to close  
7 Ellsworth Air Force Base, appreciates your service to our  
8 nation.

9 In a like manner, we are fully aware that you are  
10 seated as an independent body of examiners and were not  
11 involved in the formulation of the Secretary's  
12 recommendation. As such, we believe you'll find our  
13 preliminary analysis of the limited information that the  
14 Secretary released in the weeks after his recommendation  
15 were forwarded to you and the bodies of data, minutes and  
16 decisions released in the past week will establish that  
17 there is substantial deviation from the criteria approved  
18 for this round of closures and realignments. We believe  
19 you will insure this is a fair process and the credibility  
20 of data used in your determinations must be above reproach  
21 if the American public is to believe in the integrity of  
22 the BRAC process.

23 From what you just saw in the video, you should  
24 have an understanding of who we are and the values in which  
25 we believe. Now that you know a little bit about our

1 community and the values by which we live at this time,  
2 let's get down to the facts about our reaction to the  
3 Secretary's decisions. In addition to being adamantly  
4 opposed to your approval of the Secretary of Defense's  
5 recommendation to close Ellsworth Air Force Base, we are  
6 deeply disappointed in the Department of Defense's  
7 management in the release of data, records of discussions,  
8 and decision processes that were used in formulating the  
9 recommendations proposed to you. We believe that you,  
10 likewise, share our sense of frustration with the  
11 presentation of such unnecessary challenges a community  
12 such as ours, and for the matter, for that matter to the  
13 Commission.

14 For the last several weeks, again, have been like  
15 a kaleidoscope, and I mentioned that earlier when I was on  
16 the wrong page. I won't repeat it. At this time I would  
17 again like to introduce the video that the Air Combat  
18 Command, former commander of Air Combat Command, General  
19 Mike Loh, has provided for this Commission.

20 Please show the General Loh video at this time.

21 GENERAL LOH (via video): I thank the Commission  
22 for this opportunity to present this statement to the BRAC  
23 Commissioners in Rapid City, South Dakota, supporting  
24 Ellsworth Air Force Base.

25 Please allow me to introduce myself. I am John

1 Michael Loh, a retired Air Force four-star general. I  
2 served as the commander of Air Combat Command from its  
3 inception in June 1992, until my retirement from the Air  
4 Force in July 1995. Prior to that, I was the Air Force  
5 Vice Chief of Staff during the first Gulf War, and  
6 commander of Tactical Air Command from March '91 until June  
7 '92.

8 As commander of Air Combat Command, I controlled  
9 all of the Air Force's bombers and bomber bases including  
10 Ellsworth Air Force Base. I was responsible for training,  
11 equipping, and maintaining combat readiness for our bomber  
12 aircraft and crews for combat operations worldwide. This  
13 included all of the B-1 bombers and B-1 bases.

14 I speak today to urge the Commission to retain  
15 Ellsworth Air Force Base as a B-1 operational base vital to  
16 our nation's security and defense preparedness.

17 And by the way, just for the record, I submit  
18 this statement voluntarily, at my own request, and I am not  
19 being compensated in any way for this testimony.

20 I believe the Pentagon deviated significantly  
21 from six of the eight BRAC criteria in its recommendation  
22 to close Ellsworth and move all of its B-1 bombers to  
23 another B-1 base. I will explain why in a minute, but  
24 first we must understand how valuable our fleet of 67 B-1s  
25 is to our current war fighting needs.

1           The B-1 bomber is the backbone of the bomber  
2 force. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the B-1s delivered  
3 more weapons and struck more targets than any other bomber  
4 or fighter by far. In Afghanistan, the B-1 accounted for  
5 40 percent, by weight, of the weapons delivered. In Iraq,  
6 34 percent. No other weapon system came close.

7           So whatever decisions you make regarding B-1s,  
8 please do so carefully because you are dealing with the Air  
9 Force's number one offensive weapon system in terms of its  
10 impact on the Global War on Terror.

11           Now, when the Air Force created Air Combat  
12 Command in 1992, it had four large B-1 bases, each with  
13 about 24 B-1s. These bases were Ellsworth Air Force Base,  
14 South Dakota, Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota,  
15 McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, and Dyess Air Force Base,  
16 Texas. Subsequent BRACs and Air Force decisions reduced  
17 the number of B-1s to its current number, 67, and the  
18 number of B-1 bases to two bases, Ellsworth and Dyess.

19           I mention this brief history because when the Air  
20 Force consolidated to two bases in 2001, it violated one of  
21 the guiding principles I consistently and scrupulously  
22 followed for long range bomber operations, and that is, do  
23 not operate more than 36 heavy, long range bombers from a  
24 single base. This long-standing principle has a sound  
25 basis. In the case of the B-1, putting more than 36

1 bombers at one base results in a very inefficient  
2 operation. Operational readiness suffers because too many  
3 crews must share too few training ranges and training  
4 airspace; logistics suffers because there's too little  
5 support infrastructure to handle greatly expanded  
6 maintenance, supply, and transportation needs; and the  
7 quality of life suffers because one base cannot provide  
8 adequately for all the medical, housing, and other needs of  
9 our people.

10 So putting all 67 B-1s at one base, the current  
11 plan under BRAC, almost doubles the maximum size for a  
12 bomber base and will greatly aggravate these adverse  
13 operational, logistical, and security problems. It's a  
14 recipe for an unmanageable congestion and never-ending  
15 chaos that spells inefficiency, waste, and degraded  
16 operational readiness for the B-1s.

17 Moreover, having the entire B-1 fleet at one base  
18 with only a single runway presents an unacceptable security  
19 risk. This situation provides an inviting target to an  
20 enemy that could render the entire B-1 fleet inoperable  
21 with a single weapon.

22 In addition, having two B-1 bases allows the Air  
23 Force the option of adding more B-1s from inactive status,  
24 as it did just recently, and allows for the introduction of  
25 additional missions at both bases, an important BRAC

1 criteria not available if Ellsworth is closed.

2 So as I read the eight BRAC criteria, I find that  
3 the Pentagon deviated significantly on six of them in its  
4 recommendation on Ellsworth.

5 Criteria one concerns the impact of operational  
6 readiness. Closing Ellsworth will decrease the operational  
7 readiness of the B-1 fleet, as I explained earlier.

8 Criteria two concerns facilities and airspace at  
9 receiving and existing bases. Closing Ellsworth shuts down  
10 forever valuable training airspace in the northwest U.S.  
11 and aggravates the available training ranges and airspace  
12 at the receiving base.

13 Criteria three concerns the ability to  
14 accommodate future requirements. Closing Ellsworth will  
15 deny the Pentagon a valuable base for future missions in an  
16 area that will offer ideal, unencroached land and airspace  
17 for generations to come.

18 Criteria four concerns cost and manpower.  
19 Closing Ellsworth will not reduce cost or manpower. In the  
20 long run, trying to operate 67 B-1s from a single base will  
21 cost more than operating two B-1 bases at peak efficiency  
22 for each.

23 Criteria six concerns the economic impact on the  
24 community. Closing Ellsworth will be devastating to the  
25 regional economy. Others will speak to this impact better

1 than I.

2 Criteria seven concerns the ability of the  
3 receiving infrastructure to support the mission. Closing  
4 Ellsworth will cause enormous, long-term infrastructure  
5 problems at the receiving base that will adversely impact  
6 operational readiness of the B-1 fleet.

7 So, in my opinion, the Pentagon in its zeal to  
8 consolidate and reach some perceived quota for base  
9 closures, picked the wrong base by putting Ellsworth on the  
10 list. There are many other options that do not involve  
11 this questionable move of all B-1s to a single operating  
12 location while closing the one base, Ellsworth, that is  
13 located in a region of the country having the capacity for  
14 unencroached military operations as far in the future as  
15 the eye can see.

16 Mr. Chairman, I have served as the senior  
17 commander of bomber operations for our nation. I sincerely  
18 feel that tinkering with our most productive bomber fleet  
19 in this way is a misguided and risky application of the  
20 BRAC process. I urge you to retain Ellsworth Air Force  
21 Base as an urgently needed B-1 base and remove it from the  
22 closure list.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 COLONEL MCKEON: Commissioners, to bring another

1 personal face to the powerful testimony General Loh has  
2 provided to you, I present to you Air Force Lieutenant  
3 General Thad Wolfe, retired. General Wolfe commanded the  
4 509th Bomb Wing and its FB-111. He also commanded  
5 Ellsworth's Strategic Warfare Center from 1990 to 1992,  
6 with its three wings of B-1Bs, KC-135s, EC-135s, B-52s,  
7 T-38s and UH-1s flying missions, as well as the 44th  
8 Strategic Missile Wing as an associate unit. General Wolfe  
9 concluded his career as Vice Commander of Air Combat  
10 Command from 1993 to 1996 with a vast variety of bases and  
11 weapon systems assigned.

12 General Wolfe.

13 GENERAL WOLFE: Thank you for the opportunity to  
14 present this statement regarding the proposed closure of  
15 Ellsworth Air Force Base.

16 Like General Loh, you should know that I am here  
17 as a private citizen. Neither I nor the company with which  
18 I work are being compensated for my appearance here today.  
19 I am joining you today because I am concerned about the  
20 tentative decision on the closure of Ellsworth.

21 As Jim said, I served at Ellsworth in 1990 as a  
22 commander of what was then called the Strategic Warfare  
23 Center, and I was a senior commander at the base. Later  
24 from 1992 through 1995 - how soon we forget, it could have  
25 been '93 - I served as Vice commander of Air Combat

1 Command, overseeing the operations of Ellsworth along with  
2 about 30 other bases. I worked directly for General Loh,  
3 who's statement you have just heard. He is widely  
4 respected for his intellect, pragmatism, and his advocacy  
5 for good analysis. His thoughtful comments should be  
6 helpful to you.

7 My sole purpose today is to provide this panel  
8 with information and insights that may also help you reach  
9 some difficult decisions. In the end, I have concluded  
10 that the Commission should recommend retaining Ellsworth as  
11 a B-1 operational base for its current and future mission  
12 value, for security reasons which weigh against  
13 consolidation of all B-1 assets at one place, and as a  
14 unique hedge against evolving new mission requirements in  
15 uncertain times. I will support my conclusion in terms of  
16 my doubts about the OSD and Air Force closure  
17 recommendation.

18 But first, something we all seem to agree on.  
19 Most everybody agrees on the viability of the B-1. That  
20 viability was apparently not a factor in deciding to  
21 recommend closing Ellsworth. The B-1 will undoubtedly beat  
22 its life expectancy and will have new technology inserted  
23 to extend its service life and its effectiveness as a  
24 weapon system.

25 But military value takes more than just the

1        weapon system. What adds to the B-1 operational  
2        effectiveness may be unique to this region because of  
3        Ellsworth's remarkable proximity to uncrowded and quickly  
4        accessible airspace and ranges, sparsely populated and  
5        diverse terrain, proximity to other training areas nearby  
6        for joint and combined operations, and finally to modernize  
7        infrastructure. Ellsworth is literally a new base.

8                So how did Ellsworth end up on the closure list?  
9        I am not sure, but let me offer some thoughts for context.  
10       Ellsworth has been a well-kept secret, perhaps too well  
11       kept. As our Air Force, our Major Air Commands and our  
12       Unified Combatant Commands have changed, including  
13       resubordination of units, fewer people in decision-making  
14       roles have long-term, direct insight into some unique and  
15       valuable aspects of Ellsworth. What I am referring to, in  
16       addition to the physical environment I just mentioned, is  
17       the close relationship between Rapid City, the State, the  
18       Congressional Delegation, and tribal entities in the area.  
19       I say this to underscore my concern that when it comes time  
20       to make judgments about Ellsworth, the forced decision  
21       between closing one or other of the B-1 bases, during that  
22       decision the judges lacked the more rounded insight  
23       required to make the best decisions combining objective  
24       data and subjective judgments.

25                Now that you have spent even a day here and on

1 the base, you may also share my concern as former commander  
2 of Ellsworth and later overseeing ACC bases, that the Air  
3 Force and OSD decision lacks an appreciation of just what  
4 this enduring civil-military relationship between base and  
5 community has provided, provided to the military success of  
6 Ellsworth and the Air Force, and would continue to bring in  
7 the future an aspect not quantifiable within DOD data  
8 calls. While you'll hear more about this in a moment, as  
9 someone who led the airmen at Ellsworth, I urge you to  
10 consider what that relationship has meant in terms of  
11 quality of life and quality of service; unquestionably  
12 significant elements of military value directly and  
13 indirectly at Ellsworth.

14 As you notice today, Ellsworth is one of the best  
15 equipped and most updated in the Air Force inventory. For  
16 instance, over a thousand housing units, including many  
17 under construction today improving the quality of life for  
18 our young airman, officers and their families. These were  
19 a result of the combined commitment of the base, the Air  
20 Force, the townspeople, the Governor, and the Congressional  
21 Delegation over time.

22 The same is true for vast infrastructure  
23 improvements. In fact, the infrastructure is newer, more  
24 modern and in better shape than most bases not on the  
25 closure list, and I'm not sure the data reflects the most

1 recent upgrades.

2 The partnership extends to such vital elements as  
3 continued community support for combat competitions that  
4 enhance military value - although most of the competition  
5 today is with the enemy on the battlefield - and support  
6 for our people increasingly placed in harm's way in the  
7 Global War on Terrorism. It also extends to open  
8 information flow between the Governor's office and  
9 Ellsworth when plans, policies and activities would affect  
10 the other, shared insights in environmental technology  
11 valuable to state and base, regular opportunities to  
12 exchange cultural insights with the Lakota Sioux,  
13 efficiencies in medical care through exchange of patients  
14 and equipment between the Ellsworth medical facility and  
15 the VA hospitals in the area, and an open and rational  
16 relationship with the union representing many Ellsworth  
17 employees, a strong program to support the hiring with  
18 skill development of individuals with special challenges,  
19 and access to the most accessible forests, mountains and  
20 other attractions that draw vast numbers to the Black Hills  
21 and surrounding area. Young people who serve here want to  
22 stay or return.

23 Well, the list could go on, but the real point is  
24 that there is a flaw, it seems to me, in the BRAC  
25 assessment criteria and process that fails to capture and

1 consider vital subjective factors such as these that  
2 contribute directly to the success of our air crews and  
3 support personnel; so it is left to the Commission to  
4 overlay their judgment onto the OSD analysis.

5 I have additional concerns with closing Ellsworth  
6 with its adverse affect on our nation's security and future  
7 flexibility of our Air Force. I share General Loh's view  
8 that consolidation of B-1s at one base will have a  
9 measurable adverse impact on readiness and military  
10 effectiveness of the B-1 fleet. For instance, as an aside,  
11 Ellsworth's B-1s regularly outscore their peers in  
12 readiness measurements in large part due to factors unique  
13 to this region and this base, not unlike the partnership I  
14 just spoke of moments ago and the flying environment. Due  
15 to that flying environment, Ellsworth has proven to be the  
16 ideal location for B-1 bed down and crew training, and I  
17 urge you to review readiness differences between the B-1  
18 bases.

19 Of further concern about the data used to justify  
20 closing Ellsworth, I believe that the assessors erred when  
21 comparing the Lancer military operating area with the  
22 Powder River complex literally overhead here. It is not  
23 clear that they looked at the qualitative value of the  
24 training available, but appeared to score primarily the  
25 distance to and number of entry points of each range

1 complex. Those data are interesting, but not compelling  
2 when looking at overall training value.

3 I also believe BRAC is dealing with an incomplete  
4 view of future missions and Ellsworth's role and value  
5 therein. Important command missions are changing rapidly  
6 while the BRAC process is underway. New missions like  
7 global strike, information operation,  
8 intelligence/surveillance and reconnaissance, missile  
9 defense, support to civil authority, and the broader  
10 homeland security arena, and again just broadened homeland  
11 defense to include maritime and land surveillance, they are  
12 rapidly emerging.

13 And again, I look at the context this way: You  
14 realize that Ellsworth is subordinate to Air Combat  
15 Command; Air Combat Command, in turn, is a component to  
16 several combat and commands that rely on capabilities at  
17 Ellsworth. ACC also provides forces to the Strategic  
18 Command headquartered in Omaha, US Northern Command  
19 headquartered in Colorado Springs, and Joint Forces Command  
20 at Norfolk, and also through Joints Forces Command to other  
21 regional combatant commands around the world.

22 The point is that each of these supported  
23 commands has evolving missions that would use the kind of  
24 capabilities at or potentially resident at Ellsworth if it  
25 were tasked. There is no base in the central region better

1 positioned to do that.

2 All of those evolving missions will require  
3 forces, synchronization, training, exercises, and  
4 education. To further complicate it, DOD is transforming  
5 to joint functional component commands wherein service  
6 forces can work for anybody, anyplace, at any time. This  
7 is occurring as the U.S. is pulling back from overseas  
8 stations reducing forward-based forces. That puts  
9 additional premiums on bases in the U.S. To date, I don't  
10 believe that the BRAC process has been capable of giving  
11 this adequate airing because the changes are ongoing right  
12 now, and some are anticipated.

13 Well, with these evolving missions, factors which  
14 should be further considered include Ellsworth's potential  
15 value in near space activity and the essential use of the  
16 airspace in this region in support of missile defense; the  
17 need to maintain forces at different locations to place  
18 stress on the information technology and net-centric nature  
19 of conflict. DOD is changing to this model today, which  
20 appears to run somewhat counter to closing of high value  
21 bases like Ellsworth. Our response to the Global War on  
22 Terrorism should consider Ellsworth for potential,  
23 conventional ICBMS, unmanned air vehicles, as I mentioned  
24 earlier, and perhaps even unmanned combat air vehicles,  
25 taking advantage again of the special airspace and ranges

1 as far as population and existing infrastructure.

2 Redundant somewhat to that, NORAD and U.S.  
3 Northern Command may have potential for Ellsworth in  
4 maintaining, training with and operating UAVs for  
5 surveillance of our borders.

6 Again, this list could go on, but it is  
7 illustrative and not exhaustive. It points out that  
8 resolving Ellsworth's capabilities due to a questionable a  
9 priori decision to consolidate the fleet seems a risky  
10 proposition, to say the least. Our Air Force itself  
11 appeared to recognize this when it reviewed its decision  
12 regarding keeping a strategic presence in the upper  
13 Midwest. As you may know, Ellsworth's military value  
14 scores ranked first and sixth of the eight mission areas,  
15 and second in the other two. The solution to both of these  
16 is to recognize the strategic redundancy and operational  
17 effectiveness are simply too important to sacrifice on the  
18 alter of consolidation and budget cuts. Both are solved by  
19 removing Ellsworth from the list, preserving the dual B-1  
20 bed down, and working with due diligence to expand  
21 Ellsworth's missions.

22 Napoleon once said that in combat, the moral is  
23 to the physical, as three is to one. Well, the combination  
24 of the superior training environment, young people who want  
25 to serve here, and the enduring positive civil-military

1 relationship have added uniquely to the dominant value of  
2 the moral component of military effectiveness at Ellsworth.  
3 It shows in combat today, and it promises to do so even  
4 more dramatically in the future.

5 We are counting on your roll as Commissioners to  
6 be the adequately empowered authority capable of judging  
7 some of the judgments that have been made in the process to  
8 date. That is what I very respectfully ask of you in  
9 removing Ellsworth from the BRAC closure list.

10 Thank you, and good luck as you execute this  
11 awesome responsibility.

12 (Applause.)

13 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, General Wolfe.

14 Now, before I move onto more specifics of our  
15 preliminary analysis, I would like to provide you with a  
16 little more information about my Air Force career  
17 experiences.

18 From 1987 until 1989, I was commander of the 11th  
19 Strategic Group responsible for flying operations of the  
20 European Tanker Task Force at RAF Fairford in the U.K,  
21 there goes to Spain and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In 1989, I  
22 stood up and was wing commander of the 99th Strategic  
23 Weapons Wing here at Ellsworth Air Force Base, a wing  
24 unique in that from Ellsworth it trained crews from B-52s,  
25 B-1s, FB-111s, and KC-135 aircraft. And finally, I served

1 as Chief of Staff of the Warfare Center under General  
2 Wolfe.

3 As to some of our specific analysis to date, a  
4 close examination of the comparative military value  
5 rankings among the three bases in north central U.S., where  
6 the Air Force has stated they plan to maintain a strategic  
7 presence, Ellsworth ranked first in six of the eight  
8 functional categories. Ellsworth is clearly a base to be  
9 retained.

10 As used for their Ellsworth recommendation, Air  
11 Force Basing Principle #10, directing consolidated  
12 operations, violates Air Force Basing Principle #7 that  
13 directs long range strike basing to provide flexible  
14 strategic response. Consolidating all B-1 aircraft in one  
15 base with one runway violates that principle.

16 The information on Ellsworth's infrastructure is  
17 not accurately categorized in the data used in the  
18 recommendation to close Ellsworth. Clear examples are the  
19 total square footage of facilities and aircraft parking  
20 capacity.

21 Ellsworth's rating on current and future mission  
22 capability is undervalued by a misconstructured metric  
23 measuring access and use of the primary aerial training  
24 range managed by Ellsworth.

25 Consistent with General Loh's assessment of the

1 ability of a single B-1 base to maintain a satisfactory or  
2 higher aircraft mission capable rate, the Air Force  
3 substantially deviated from Military Value Criteria #1 in  
4 recommending the consolidation of Ellsworth's consistently  
5 higher rated B-1 operations at a base that maintained a  
6 lesser operational readiness rate, thereby impacting  
7 training, readiness and war fighting.

8 The Air Force substantially deviated from  
9 Military Value Criteria #2, in that the recommended closure  
10 of Ellsworth will relocate the B-1B aircraft, which  
11 constitutes 82 percent of the use of the immediately  
12 adjacent airspace, called the Powder River and MOA, or  
13 military operating airspace area, to a base at least two  
14 hours flight time away, thereby either increasing  
15 operational costs or reducing mission effectiveness.

16 The Air Force substantially deviated from  
17 Military Value Criteria #3 in that the reduced use of the  
18 Powder River MOA will either increase the cost of  
19 operations per missions flown from out of the area, or  
20 cause it to be abandoned for use by future total force  
21 requirements.

22 If the Secretary's recommended closure of  
23 Ellsworth is approved, General Loh's assessment of the loss  
24 of valuable training airspace constitutes substantial  
25 deviation from Military Value Criteria #3 regarding use of

1 the Powder River MOA. If, on the other hand, the Powder  
2 River MOA is not closed, it is difficult - if not  
3 impossible - to understand how Ellsworth scored low with  
4 respect to access to the Powder River MOA.

5 The Air Force substantially deviated from  
6 Military Value Criteria #4, in that the cost to operate the  
7 entire B-1 fleet will exceed the cost of maintaining two  
8 bases, each of which has the capacity to accept future  
9 forced bed downs.

10 The Air Force substantially deviated from  
11 Military Value Criteria #6, in that of the three bases in  
12 the north central U.S. considered for strategic presence  
13 retention, the recommended closure of Ellsworth will  
14 eliminate the most highly rated base for realigning tanker  
15 aircraft, or the bed down of future forced missions such as  
16 the unmanned aerial vehicle, commander control,  
17 intelligence/surveillance and reconnaissance, C2ISR, or  
18 emerging missions such as the airborne laser.

19 The Air Force substantially deviated from  
20 Military Value Number #6, in that of the three bases in the  
21 north central U.S. considered for strategic presence  
22 retention, the recommended closure of Ellsworth will more  
23 severely impact the existing community and its vicinity  
24 than the one being recommended for retention for an  
25 emerging mission.

1           The Air Force substantially deviated from  
2 Military Value Criteria #7, in that the recommended closure  
3 of Ellsworth will relocate B-1B assets to a base that has a  
4 lesser current plant replacement value, and will have a  
5 lesser infrastructure and overall capacity even after the  
6 more than \$100 million required facility projects are  
7 constructed.

8           Commissioners, I would now like to introduce to  
9 you Air Force Colonel Pat McElgunn, retired. Pat served at  
10 Ellsworth from 1989 to 1994, and commanded the largest  
11 security group in the Strategic Air Command. After 27  
12 years of service, he joined us in 1994, as Director of our  
13 Ellsworth Task Force.

14           Mr. Pat McElgunn.

15           (Appause.)

16           COLONEL MCELGUNN: Chairman Skinner, Commissioner  
17 Bilbray, and Commissioner Coyle, on behalf of the Ellsworth  
18 Task Force, I welcome you to the military support community  
19 of Rapid City.

20           As we began to analyze the data and the minutes  
21 and the decisions the Secretary had used in the preparation  
22 of his recommendations, we became concerned about the  
23 integrity and the clarity of the data. We were also  
24 concerned about the unprecedented withholding of  
25 information used in determining which bases should close.

1 I testify here today with a conviction that from what we  
2 have seen to date, the Air Force's recommendations to the  
3 Secretary regarding Ellsworth are not based on accurate  
4 information and substantially deviate from the BRAC 2005  
5 criteria.

6 You have heard a number of specific citations to  
7 the effect, and I am convinced that the Air Force took a  
8 basic imperative and applied it to the B-1B weapon system,  
9 thereby violating the basic principle of ensuring the  
10 flexibility of its long range strike force.

11 In addition, from what limited information and  
12 time we have been afforded, Ellsworth's modernized  
13 facilities and base operations support cost were not  
14 properly considered in head-to-head competition with bases  
15 in our central U.S., and in similar evaluations in this  
16 region's bases capable of handling heavy aircraft.

17 Some examples of Ellsworth's military value in  
18 terms of operational advantages are best characterized by  
19 easy and quick access to ranges in the upper Midwest; and  
20 in terms of air flight, ranges in Utah and Nevada, low  
21 density air traffic, unconstrained airspace. This is  
22 flyover country - we understand that - and excellent flying  
23 weather provides ideal conditions for DOD, and in addition,  
24 they can add in multiple missions.

25 We are at the geographical center of the United

1 States in certain terms. We are in an ideal location for  
2 global strike missions from Ellsworth. The Air Force  
3 perceives that that is an evolving responsibility that they  
4 have to be able to launch those missions from the central  
5 United States.

6 We obviously are also positioned to have access  
7 to the shortest polar routes in the most likely theaters of  
8 operation we face today. We also have the security  
9 advantages of being distant from the coast in terms of  
10 being well within the evolving national missile defense  
11 umbrella.

12 We have a low density population. We do not have  
13 the probability of high volume urban sprawl that we are  
14 seeing in large metropolitan areas where the Air Force is  
15 currently positioned.

16 The bottom line is that Ellsworth has operational  
17 advantages to make it the ideal base for the 21st century,  
18 as General Loh has so accurately described. In terms of  
19 joint mission capability, we have a 65-year history of  
20 supporting multiple aircraft systems including bombers,  
21 tankers, command and control, jet trainers, helicopters,  
22 and ground and flight missions.

23 As recently as 1990, Ellsworth housed the  
24 Strategic Warfare Center that General Wolfe described to  
25 you. We have four wings with 7,300 personnel assigned

1 here. We have the capacity. Ellsworth is better  
2 positioned today to support those missions due to its  
3 comprehensive facilities modernizations. Our delegation  
4 has worked diligently for the last decade plus to modernize  
5 Ellsworth's facilities. We have space available for  
6 operations, maintenance and support: 230,000 square yards  
7 of ramp space; 200,000 square feet in eight large aircraft  
8 docks; 100,000 square feet in a single arched structure,  
9 one of very few that are left in the United States, for  
10 oversized aircraft capable of handling two 747s at the same  
11 time; 99,000 square feet of administrative space; and  
12 20,000 square feet of maintenance and support space. A  
13 flight line dock can also support multiple joint base  
14 options for future manned and unmanned atmospheric  
15 platforms.

16 In terms of undeveloped and suitable  
17 characterized space in terms of environmental issues,  
18 Ellsworth has 1,800 acres of land, which can be developed  
19 in a relatively short period of time due to the aggressive  
20 work of the environmental shop on the base in the last two  
21 decades.

22 And last in this arena, Ellsworth's mil-con and  
23 airfield infrastructure do not present major funding  
24 requirements in the Air Force's FY06 Unfunded Priority  
25 List.

1           In terms of future missions, referring to the Air  
2 Force's Transformation Flight Plan, that infrastructure I  
3 just described to you makes an ideal base for both active  
4 duty, guard or reserve missions. Ellsworth can support  
5 national guard initiatives, and reserve component  
6 footprints can be placed within the base itself without  
7 extraordinary mil-con requirements, and take advantage of  
8 the excellent opportunities we have in terms of the  
9 infrastructure and training opportunities. And also, in  
10 terms of some joint training that was going on in the  
11 pre-911 period, we have the capability not only on the  
12 base, but also in the arena of western South Dakota, the  
13 Guernsey range in Wyoming, to conduct significant large  
14 sized blended operations with guard, reserve and active  
15 duty.

16           Our bottom line is if we have a modern in-place  
17 base, it does not need to be built. You've heard it  
18 described as a base that's less than 20 years of age in  
19 terms of how it has been rebuilt in the last decade or  
20 more. It was. Significant improvements were made to it in  
21 the early to mid 1980s to bed down the B-1 platform. Today  
22 Ellsworth is a platform, as described, that does the heavy  
23 lifting in AEF cycles, the B-1 bombers rotation out on high  
24 demand. Their troops, their air crews perform flawlessly.  
25 As described by General Loh, they deliver the lion's share

1 of the ordinance when called upon. They are the weapon of  
2 choice for CENTCOM in terms of being the linebacker when  
3 the troops on the ground need support.

4 In 2001, Ellsworth was rated as one of the five  
5 top Air Force bases for the bed down of Global Hawk  
6 Mission, and subsequent infrastructure improvements have  
7 enhanced this for future manned or unmanned aerial vehicle  
8 capabilities. Overall, the last decade or so we have seen  
9 an investment of an excess of \$150 million into Ellsworth's  
10 infrastructure and into its quality of life facilities.

11 The majority of the work force at Ellsworth, you  
12 probably heard this morning, operates and works on a daily  
13 basis in structures that have been built since 1985, and  
14 with approval of \$14 million in the FY07 budget with  
15 aggressive management provided by the base's military  
16 housing office, every family on Ellsworth will live in a  
17 military family house less than 20 years of age.  
18 Unprecedented in terms of the problems that the services  
19 have with military family housing in today's constrained  
20 budget environment. On a daily basis you can see that  
21 Ellsworth has the lowest utility rates in the Air Combat  
22 Command; some of the most reliable and extremely  
23 cost-effective electric power generated at 50 percent of  
24 the commercial rates. The base upgraded its internal  
25 electrical system in the '90s, similar savings in natural

1 gas requirements, and they have long-term water rights and  
2 agreements with the City of Rapid City at reasonable rates.  
3 Ellsworth's waste-water treatment plant is operating at  
4 about half of its capacity. It has the potential to  
5 obviously handle another similar load, but is also being  
6 upgraded as we go through this particular budget cycle.

7 The bottom line overall in terms of Ellsworth and  
8 its infrastructure and facilities is that it is a  
9 cost-efficient base, it is an efficient base, and it has a  
10 proven record of being able to generate combat sorties out  
11 of Ellsworth into the theaters that are of most concern to  
12 our nation today.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Colonel McElgunn.

16 Commissioners, I would now like you to hear from  
17 our Rapid City Mayor, Jim Shaw, who will speak to you on  
18 behalf of the other mayors throughout the Black Hills, and  
19 actually all the other government leaders in South Dakota.

20 (Applause.)

21 MAYOR SHAW: Commissioners, we welcome you here  
22 to Rapid City, the Black Hills, and to this great hall, the  
23 Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, and being greeted, of course,  
24 by nearly 10,000 of our citizens from throughout the  
25 region, and especially here in Rapid City.

1           Our community, and that includes Rapid City, but  
2           the broader Black Hills area, and really all of South  
3           Dakota, have a long and well-established history of both  
4           supporting and embracing our nation's military services.  
5           For over 60 years, we have supported Ellsworth's many and  
6           varied missions. Throughout World War II, Korea, Vietnam,  
7           the Cold War, and the Gulf Wars, including a 12,000 square  
8           mile intercontinental ballistic missile field here in  
9           western South Dakota.

10           Since 911, we have supported Ellsworth's base and  
11           family needs during their repeated deployments in support  
12           of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. And in a similar  
13           manner, we have seen our area's National Guard units  
14           mobilized with many still serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

15           In my position as Mayor, as someone who has the  
16           privilege of personally associating with Ellsworth's B-1B  
17           crew members, I can tell you those who train to fight from  
18           Ellsworth absolutely rave about our uncongested skies and  
19           the immediate access, as you have been hearing this  
20           afternoon, to the Powder River military operating area.  
21           The inherent military utility Ellsworth offers air crews,  
22           maintainers and support personnel is being continually  
23           demonstrated by the B-1B squadron's skilled crews  
24           delivering precision weapons and tremendous firepower for  
25           Central Command's missions over Afghanistan and Iraq.

1           In another area of base support as a community,  
2 we addressed the issue of encroaching development near  
3 Ellsworth Air Force Base in the 1990s, and took the  
4 unprecedented initiative costing multi-millions of dollars  
5 to relocate an entire interstate highway interchange and  
6 build a new five lane base access road to the main gate at  
7 Ellsworth. Now, as a result of this initiative,  
8 development that could have been an encroachment issue  
9 instead is not. Development has been drawn away from this  
10 area, and property and acreages have been purchased in that  
11 accident prevention potential zone to ensure its longevity.

12           In that same area of concern, I can assure you  
13 that we have few, if any, prospects of suffering the  
14 congestion and urban sprawl that is limiting the  
15 operational utility of many other bases, some located  
16 within cities and other in high to explosive growth areas  
17 of our nation.

18           As to another important factor in the overall  
19 management and retention of military personnel, our  
20 community pays close attention to the quality of life  
21 afforded them, and most importantly, their families. Such  
22 categories as best public schools, spousal employment  
23 opportunities, and middle-class living standard have stood  
24 out from the rest, and when combined with the quality  
25 housing and access to both national and state parks nearby,

1 military families flourish here. In fact, a 2004 survey by  
2 Expansion Management Magazine rated the overall quality of  
3 life afforded to those who live in the Rapid City community  
4 to be in the top 25 percent of 60 military support  
5 communities evaluated.

6 Further evidence of the sustained quality of life  
7 we and the rest of South Dakota enjoys is a 15-year record  
8 of being nationally recognized as one of the 10 most  
9 livable states in terms of 44 evaluation categories.

10 Commissioners, we are convinced that Ellsworth  
11 offers the Air Force and the Department of Defense an  
12 opportunity to both realize Ellsworth's military value and  
13 expand on its operational advantages and expansion  
14 capability. And further, we can assure you that the base  
15 and its missions will be fully supported by the public  
16 policy decisions within our collective communities. We  
17 will continue to embrace its people as integral members of  
18 our communities, and our Congressional Delegation will be  
19 similarly supportive.

20 In closing, please allow me to commend each of  
21 you on behalf of the citizens of Rapid City and the Black  
22 Hills area. We appreciate the great challenges and the  
23 huge job that you have as Commissioners. We believe when  
24 you have evaluated the Secretary's recommendation to close  
25 Ellsworth, you will find the counterpoints that we have

1 offered and will offer here this afternoon in the testimony  
2 of experienced officials and military leaders to prevail.  
3 As we say, we truly and sincerely believe America needs  
4 Ellsworth Air Force Base.

5 Thank you for this opportunity.

6 (Applause.)

7 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Mayor Shaw.

8 We'll now go into a lengthy introduction of our  
9 Congressional Delegation. Actually, they asked me not to,  
10 so here without further ado is our senior senator from  
11 South Dakota, Senator Tim Johnson.

12 (Applause.)

13 SENATOR JOHNSON: Well, thank you. I'd like to  
14 welcome Chairman Skinner, Commissioner Bilbray and  
15 Commissioner Coyle to South Dakota, and to thank them for  
16 their service to the Base Realignment and Closure  
17 Commission. I know each of you will give careful and  
18 thoughtful consideration to the arguments presented today  
19 in defense of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

20 I'd also like to recognize the Ellsworth Task  
21 Force, the Rapid City and Box Elder communities, the men  
22 and women stationed at Ellsworth. Your steadfast  
23 dedication, patriotism and support for Ellsworth has  
24 strengthened America.

25 This morning I had the opportunity to join the

1 Commissioners in touring Ellsworth Air Force Base, and we  
2 saw firsthand that it is an unparalleled and world class  
3 military installation that is uniquely qualified to bed  
4 down the B-1 bomber fleet. Ellsworth is physically not the  
5 same Air Force Base that it was a decade or more ago. In  
6 an age of ever changing and emerging threats, it was  
7 imperative to upgrade the facilities at Ellsworth in order  
8 to confront the new enemies of the 21st century. Without  
9 question, we have succeeded.

10 The challenge to transform Ellsworth was  
11 necessary given our military's growing reliance on the B-1  
12 bomber in defending our country. The B-1 bomber was first  
13 used in combat during Operation Desert Fox in December of  
14 1998. In recent years, B-1 bombers and their crews proved  
15 their combat value in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. In  
16 fact, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, B-1s flew fewer than 2  
17 percent of the combat sorties, but dropped more than half  
18 of the satellite guided munitions. They showed great  
19 flexibility and were assigned a broad range of targets in  
20 Iraq, including command and control facilities, bunkers,  
21 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and surface-to-missile  
22 sites. They also demonstrated the ability to linger for  
23 many hours over the battlefield, and to provide close air  
24 support for U.S. forces engaged in the field.

25 Clearly, the B-1 bomber has proven it is the

1 backbone of our bomber fleet. To ensure that its mission  
2 was not compromised and to maintain operational  
3 efficiencies and readiness, the South Dakota Congressional  
4 Delegation secured funding necessary for substantial  
5 upgrades to the base's infrastructure. As a result, today  
6 Ellsworth is a top-notch, modern, high-tech facility  
7 without equal among military installations in America.

8 In the past decade, we have secured nearly \$140  
9 million that has been invested in Ellsworth's  
10 infrastructure. This includes funding for a new flight  
11 simulator facility for B-1 crews to replace an outdated  
12 facility allowing aviators access to improved training  
13 methods. A new operations center for the 37th Bomb  
14 Squadron was built to consolidate operations that had  
15 previously been housed in three separate locations.  
16 Erected in close proximity to the new headquarters of the  
17 77th Bomb Squadron and to the flight line, it has enhanced  
18 mission responsiveness and productivity.

19 While service members must have access to the  
20 most advanced training systems available, it is equally  
21 important to provide a good quality of life to the men and  
22 women who serve Ellsworth and who serve America. The  
23 dilapidated family housing units have been replaced with  
24 military housing that ranks among the best in America. In  
25 addition, a new library and education center have been

1 built, while the McRaven Child Development Center has been  
2 remodeled and expanded. These improvements have made  
3 Ellsworth one of the most family friendly and desirable  
4 bases for military personnel and their loved ones anywhere.

5 Finally, Ellsworth is strategically located with  
6 good access to training ranges and potential for growth.  
7 Ellsworth has strong community support and does not face  
8 the urban encroachment issues that confront many of our  
9 other military installations. Rather than closing,  
10 Ellsworth has, without a doubt, demonstrated that it is our  
11 nation's premier bomber base, and is well positioned to  
12 receive additional missions.

13 The entire state of South Dakota is proud of  
14 Ellsworth and the men and women stationed there for their  
15 role in keeping America safe and free. The B-1s that call  
16 Ellsworth home are integral to our nation's defense, and  
17 Ellsworth is uniquely qualified to maintain that B-1  
18 mission. Closing Ellsworth and stationing all our bombers  
19 at one installation without carefully considering the  
20 long-term consequences will impair our ability to protect  
21 against threats at home and abroad.

22 Thank you for taking our thoughts here today into  
23 very careful consideration. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Senator Johnson.

1           Next, I would like to introduce Senator John  
2 Thune.

3           (Applause.)

4           SENATOR THUNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members  
5 of the Commission. Thank you for coming today. Welcome to  
6 Rapid City and the Black Hills.

7           As a member of the Senate Armed Services  
8 Committee, I know that you and your fellow Commissioners  
9 will bear a great responsibility in the coming months. As  
10 Commissioners, your decisions will directly impact the  
11 safety and security of all Americans.

12           The B-1 bomber, as the backbone of our nation's  
13 bomber force, plays a critical war in our War on Terror.  
14 The question before this Commission is this: Does it make  
15 military sense to house the entire B-1 fleet in a single  
16 location? Members of the BRAC Commission, we believe the  
17 answer is clear. Any further consolidation of the B-1s  
18 would create an unwise and unnecessary security risk, and  
19 the Pentagon's proposal to do so should be rejected by this  
20 Commission.

21           Let's take a look at the risks and the dangers of  
22 the Pentagon's proposal. As General Loh and General Wolfe  
23 explained, putting all of our B-1s in a single location  
24 would make our B-1 fleet unnecessarily vulnerable.

25           First, as we have so painfully learned, military

1 installations are not immune from attack. We should never  
2 forget about the short-sightedness we had as a nation  
3 before Pearl Harbor. We might dismiss that as some past  
4 distant war from another place in another time, not really  
5 applicable to today's threats, but it is.

6 We were reminded of this on September 11th when  
7 Al Qaeda attacked the Pentagon itself with tragic results.  
8 And there were also reports that the terrorists had  
9 targeted other military installations before September  
10 11th.

11 With the terrorists clearly bent on targeting our  
12 military assets and their willingness to use unconventional  
13 weapons, we should make it harder, not easier, to destroy  
14 or immobilize our fleet of B-1s. But the Pentagon's  
15 proposal would create the possibility --

16 (Applause.)

17 SENATOR THUNE: But the Pentagon's proposal would  
18 create the possibility that a single terrorist attack could  
19 wipe out our entire B-1 fleet or all of the B-1 pilots and  
20 flight crews.

21 Second, the risk of natural disasters is a  
22 constant reminder that we shouldn't put all our B-1 assets  
23 in a single location, particularly one located in the heart  
24 of tornado alley. We simply cannot afford to risk --

25 (Applause.)

1           SENATOR THUNE: We simply cannot afford to risk  
2 our nation's security on the whims of a single deadly  
3 tornado that could destroy or damage our entire B-1 fleet.  
4 The tornado you see on the screen came within 1,000 feet of  
5 the runway of McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas.  
6 The Air Force is good, but they can't control the weather.

7           Third, we can't afford to look only at the world  
8 as it is now. Instead, we have to look at the emerging  
9 threats that our nation will face 10 to 20 years from now.  
10 This is not as easy as it sounds. From the abrupt ending  
11 of the Cold War to the events of September 11th, it is  
12 clear that we live in an uncertain world full of surprises.  
13 We must learn from our history. Although the Soviet Union  
14 is gone, countries like China, North Korea, and Iran either  
15 have nuclear weapons or are actively developing them.  
16 What's more, they are seeking the means to deliver those  
17 weapons by long range ballistic missiles.

18          The lesson in all this is that the threats we  
19 face as a nation will continue to change, and to respond to  
20 those threats we need to maintain or increase our  
21 flexibility, not reduce it. If the Pentagon is allowed to  
22 close Ellsworth, it will be difficult or impossible to  
23 reopen it if we are once again surprised by the unexpected.

24          The statements by General Loh and General Wolfe  
25 that we should not over consolidate our B-1 fleet makes

1 perfect sense. It is also supported by sound military  
2 principle.

3 The Department of Defense itself has stated, if  
4 you look at the screen, in its National Defense Strategy  
5 Report issued just three months ago, that we should be  
6 guided by the goal of "developing greater flexibility to  
7 contend with uncertainty by emphasizing agility and by not  
8 overly concentrating military forces in a few locations."

9 (Applause.)

10 SENATOR THUNE: Similarly, the DOD has stated, if  
11 you look at the screen again, that they need "secure  
12 installations that ensure strategic redundancy."

13 Finally, Ellsworth's military value is clear even  
14 under the Pentagon's own analysis, and could easily expand  
15 with additional missions. The Pentagon gives to Ellsworth  
16 one of its highest scores for a tanker mission, a  
17 significantly higher ranking than the three bases that will  
18 actually be tankers under the Pentagon's plan: McConnell,  
19 Fairchild, and McDill. Among the three bases in North and  
20 South Dakota - Ellsworth, Grand Forks, and Minot -  
21 Ellsworth scored highest in six of the eight Air Force  
22 mission evaluation categories, with the other bases scoring  
23 first in only one category each. The surge capacity of  
24 Ellsworth is unmistakable.

25 We fully understand that one of the purposes of

1 this BRAC round is to save money, but we should not do so  
2 at the expense of our nation's security. With the  
3 ever-changing threats that we face in this century, we  
4 simply cannot take the chance of closing Ellsworth. If we  
5 eliminate this base, it cannot be easily replaced later.

6 Members of the Commission, we are all here today  
7 urging you to take Ellsworth off the Pentagon's proposed  
8 closure list. Obviously, Ellsworth is critically important  
9 to our state, but it is even more important to our country  
10 and to our national defense. Ellsworth is a first-class  
11 base with a critical mission in our War on Terror, both now  
12 and in the future. As a nation, we simply cannot afford to  
13 lose it.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

17 And next we have Representative Stephanie  
18 Herseth.

19 REPRESENTATIVE HERSETH: Mr. Chairman,  
20 distinguished Commissioners, members of the Commission  
21 staff, thank you for your time today and for your  
22 consideration in the weeks ahead.

23 As Senator Johnson discussed, and as you  
24 undoubtedly noticed in your tour this morning, Ellsworth  
25 has been transformed from a base of the past to a modern

1 base of the future. It has served and can continue to  
2 serve the existing B-1 mission extremely well; a mission  
3 that should not be fully consolidated into one location for  
4 the reasons that Generals Loh and Wolfe, and Senator Thune  
5 have set forth. As we in Congress work to transform our  
6 nation's military, there's no doubt that Ellsworth is also  
7 uniquely positioned to serve as an exceptional facility for  
8 emerging missions.

9 Now, you've heard earlier testimony to reference  
10 these emerging missions, so allow me to elaborate. The  
11 transformation of the Air Force is already underway, and  
12 while we have some good guesses as to what the Air Force  
13 will look like in 2025, there's never any absolute  
14 certainty about how the military will look in the future,  
15 or about how the strategic environment for our national  
16 security may change. Ellsworth is one of the few bases  
17 with the viability to accept the emerging missions  
18 currently being developed and deployed, and it is well  
19 positioned to operate virtually any defense platform  
20 conceived by the military in the future.

21 Because of Ellsworth's existing infrastructure  
22 and airspace quality, the Air Force has already recognized  
23 it as a base well positioned to handle various emerging  
24 missions, and that makes Ellsworth an extremely important  
25 aspect to our nation's military in the years to come.

1           For example, the Air Force has already identified  
2 Ellsworth as an excellent candidate for an unmanned aerial  
3 vehicle mission, such as the Predator or Global Hawk. In  
4 contract to the other base in the region recommended by the  
5 Pentagon for retention and bed down of the UAV mission,  
6 Ellsworth was one of the five continental U.S. bases  
7 identified by the Air Force's Internal Alternative  
8 Identification and Evaluation Process, and the only north  
9 central base, the only north central base considered  
10 suitable for the initial bed down of a Global Hawk UAV  
11 mission in 2001. Given the Air Force's own  
12 recommendations, I submit that the Air Force substantially  
13 deviated from the Military Value Criteria by not  
14 designating Ellsworth as a base to be retained in the north  
15 central continental United States for a UAV mission.

16           Additionally, the Air Force's own evaluation of  
17 Ellsworth's location and infrastructure positions it as a  
18 prime candidate to bed down new missions such as command  
19 and control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance,  
20 or C2ISR, space operations and tankers. As Senator Thune  
21 mentioned, Ellsworth received one of its highest scores for  
22 a tanker mission. It scored substantially higher than that  
23 received by any of the three bases the Department of  
24 Defense recommends to bed tankers.

25           Importantly, Ellsworth also has been surveyed for

1 the bed down of an airborne laser, and its arched hanger,  
2 which you saw this morning, known as the Pride Hanger, is  
3 capable of housing two 747 sized aircraft, making it a  
4 prime candidate for that mission.

5 In closing, allow me to reiterate that Ellsworth  
6 is the only facility in the region considered suitable for  
7 a Global Hawk UAV mission. It is also ready and uniquely  
8 capable of accepting the airborne laser mission, and the  
9 base has the flexibility of accepting emerging missions,  
10 such as C2ISR tanker missions and space operations. I  
11 submit that the Department of Defense, by not adequately  
12 considering the merging mission compatibility of Ellsworth,  
13 engaged in an analysis that resulted in a substantial  
14 deviation from the Military Value Criteria. The  
15 Secretary's recommendation to close Ellsworth Air Force  
16 Base is, therefore, misguided and should be disapproved.

17 As the Commission moves forward, I ask that you  
18 review the Air Force's own findings related to the  
19 potential of Ellsworth to house both a UAV and airborne  
20 laser mission. Those findings reflect what those of us  
21 familiar with the base already know, and hopefully you've  
22 now come to know in your site visit and this hearing today:  
23 It is a world-class modern facility well positioned to  
24 handle emerging and unencroached mission operations in the  
25 decades to come, and to help meet our national defense

1 needs in an ever-changing strategic environment.

2 Thank you again for your consideration.

3 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Representative  
4 Herseth.

5 Commissioners, we will now move to another area  
6 of concern that can best be addressed by an authority on  
7 the impact of Ellsworth Air Force Base as a vital component  
8 of our state and region. Professor Sidney Goss, Ph.D., of  
9 the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology here in  
10 Rapid City, will provide you with a perspective that might  
11 not be readily understood or appreciated in terms of impact  
12 on our state and region.

13 Doctor Goss.

14 (Applause.)

15 DR. GOSS: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My  
16 name is Sidney Goss. My focus today is to show the impact  
17 of the closure of Ellsworth Air Force Base on our  
18 community.

19 Among the BRAC selection criteria is one which  
20 states that the Commission is to consider the impact of  
21 existing communities in the vicinity of the military  
22 installation. Our community is large, cohesive, and may be  
23 defined in many ways. Some would define our community as  
24 the entire State of South Dakota; others, as the western  
25 half of South Dakota; others, as the 100 mile trade area

1 with 144,000 population; others, as the 200 mile trade area  
2 with 459,000 persons; and still others as the Black Hills  
3 region. We live in an area where people think nothing of  
4 driving over a hundred miles each way to shop. All of  
5 these definitions of community are valid.

6 For purposes of comparison, I'll also refer to  
7 the federally defined United States Census Bureau area  
8 called the Rapid City Metropolitan Statistical Area, or the  
9 Rapid City MSA. This includes the populations of  
10 Pennington and Meade Counties. Coincidentally, Ellsworth  
11 Air Force Base sits on the county line of the county who is  
12 making up this statistical area. The surrounding area by  
13 any definition supplies more than sufficient population to  
14 support guard or reserve units.

15 As a state, South Dakota is rural. Our entire  
16 state's population is just 771,000 people. That's roughly  
17 the size of a small city. In fact, Indianapolis, Indiana,  
18 or Jacksonville, Florida, have roughly the same populations  
19 as the entire State of South Dakota. This satellite  
20 nighttime image shows the rurality of South Dakota quite  
21 well. The upper Midwest area without many lights, that's  
22 South Dakota.

23 (Laughter.)

24 DR. GOSS: On your way here -- and they like it  
25 that way. On your way here, you drove through the town of

1 Box Elder, South Dakota. Its population is about 3,000.  
2 Rapid City, where you are now seated, has a population of  
3 about 60,000, and the Rapid City MSA or the combined two  
4 counties' population is 160,000 people.

5 Ellsworth contains nearly 4,500 military  
6 personnel with 5,600 dependents. It also employs over a  
7 thousand civilian employees not counting their dependents,  
8 for a total of over 11,000 persons. Ellsworth also creates  
9 1,700 indirect jobs without counting their dependents. If  
10 we quickly find employment for 1,000 of these individuals -  
11 a major feat in an area with low unemployment - we'll lose  
12 an estimated 10,000 people. This conservative number of  
13 10,000 represents 9 percent of that metropolitan  
14 statistical area, that two county population base. Ten  
15 thousand persons would represent in the Minneapolis MSA  
16 only 0.3 percent; in the Denver MSA, 0.4 percent; in the  
17 Rapid City MSA, a full 9 percent.

18 We are also an area experiencing net  
19 out-migration. Over the past censal decade, our metro area  
20 lost 1,300 persons due to net out-migration. In other  
21 words, over 1,300 more persons moved out than into this  
22 area between 1990 and 2000, the last censal decade. That's  
23 roughly 130 persons a year net migration loss for our  
24 metropolitan area.

25 We understand that the Department of Defense

1 wishes to move quickly. If our metropolitan area of  
2 116,000 people were to lose 10,000 persons in one year,  
3 this would be the equivalent of 76 years of out-migration  
4 for this area hitting us all at once. This impact is  
5 significant.

6 Our community has experienced moderate growth  
7 because births outnumber deaths, giving us today's 116,000  
8 population. A decrease of 10,000 persons would have put  
9 our population back to 106,000, the level of 1988; a 17  
10 year regression.

11 Economically, Ellsworth represents \$278 million  
12 annually in our economy. This is a large figure, in South  
13 Dakota terms, and represents, in fact, a figure larger than  
14 the total annual gross sales of nearby Sturgis, South  
15 Dakota, some 20 miles from here.

16 (Laughter.)

17 DR. GOSS: Simply put, Ellsworth Air Force Base  
18 is South Dakota's second largest employer. The state's  
19 largest employer is some 350 miles east of here. I don't  
20 know how to state its economic -- oh, we're getting a  
21 strobe show. I don't know how to state its economic impact  
22 more clearly. Ellsworth Air Force Base is South Dakota's  
23 second largest employer.

24 Now, please allow me to be more specific about  
25 the integration of Ellsworth personnel and our community,

1 state, and region. First, schools. Ellsworth is served by  
2 area public schools; most notably, the Douglas School  
3 system. Douglas K-12 School contains 2,500 students, half  
4 of whom are Ellsworth dependents. This school is the 10th  
5 largest school in South Dakota. Out of South Dakota's 165  
6 school districts, the Douglas system is larger than 155 of  
7 them. It is larger than the 25 smallest school systems  
8 combined. A reduction of half this total, half this school  
9 is equivalent to the closing of 16 of our smallest entire  
10 school districts.

11 University and technical school offerings are  
12 popular at Ellsworth. We combine our local populations with  
13 military personnel and dependents to create a college  
14 student nucleus large enough to support our offerings. A  
15 reduction of 10,000 base-related personnel will seriously  
16 diminish the educational opportunities of those of us  
17 remaining in this community.

18 Services. The local United Way indicates that  
19 their member agencies rely heavily upon Ellsworth and its  
20 personnel in many ways. While there are too many examples  
21 to cite, at last year's Day of Caring, a one day of  
22 community projects, 300 Ellsworth personnel worked on over  
23 54 projects in this community. That's a one-day effort.  
24 Their volunteerism is an integral part of our community.

25 Medicine. The Rapid City Regional Hospital

1 provides most of the inpatient healthcare needs of  
2 Ellsworth personnel and dependents. Twelve percent of the  
3 babies born there are to Ellsworth personnel and  
4 dependents. During the past five years, this hospital  
5 served 27,000 military personnel, dependent or retiree  
6 cases, generating \$50 million in gross charges over that  
7 five-year time frame.

8 Culture. Our arts community, our symphony, our  
9 theaters, our sports teams all receive substantial support  
10 from the Ellsworth community. Our community's ability to  
11 offer such life-enriching experiences will be diminished  
12 with the loss of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

13 Our places of worship are led by and contributed  
14 to significantly by Ellsworth personnel and dependents.

15 Our security and safety. I'm not talking here  
16 about the nation's security, but instead our volunteer fire  
17 fighters, search and rescue teams, or police reserves. For  
18 example, when search and rescue teams called recently for  
19 assistance to find a lost Alzheimer's patient, over 50 of  
20 the searchers were Ellsworth personnel. As a part of the  
21 mutual aid fire departments, the Ellsworth Air Force Base  
22 Fire Department responds regularly to fires throughout the  
23 area.

24 The law enforcement divisions of Ellsworth are  
25 true partners with the local sheriff and police

1 departments. In the Pennington County Sheriff's Department  
2 alone, 50 current employees are former Ellsworth Air Force  
3 Base personnel or spouses, comprising 19 percent of the  
4 staff. In fact, 12 of the 18, 12 of the 28 members of the  
5 Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department are Ellsworth Air Force  
6 Base personnel.

7 Retirees. Our community is enriched by the  
8 countless military retirees residing here. They fill much  
9 needed roles in our community and are integral to our  
10 economic and cultural well being. While it is difficult to  
11 get an exact count, we know that a minimum of over 2,700  
12 retirees use medical facilities at Ellsworth. The number  
13 of retirees in our community, however, far exceeds this  
14 figure.

15 Quality of life. The Ellsworth Air Force Base  
16 community has been ranked not by us, but by independent  
17 agencies and organizations as among the top in lifestyle.  
18 Morgan Quitno put South Dakota in the top 10 of the most  
19 livable states in America. Expansion Magazine ranks us  
20 among 60 military communities in the top quarter, ranking  
21 number two in schools, and high in numerous other  
22 categories. In short, the military personnel enjoy living  
23 here as much as we enjoy having them here.

24 Commissioners, Ellsworth Air Force Base is a  
25 significant part of our community, and we are a significant

1 part of theirs. We know that your decision must be based  
2 primarily on military value factors. We also know that  
3 your criteria include the impact on existing communities in  
4 the vicinity of the military installation. Congress  
5 included this provision for a reason. Commissioners, the  
6 impact of the closure of Ellsworth Air Force Base on this  
7 community, state, and region will be significant and long  
8 lasting.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 COLONEL MCKEON: Thank you, Sid.

12 As you have heard from the testimony provided, we  
13 have pronounced differences with the Secretary's  
14 recommendations and offer to you that Ellsworth Air Force  
15 Base should not be closed. Rather, it should be retained  
16 for basing the currently assigned B-1 squadron, and that  
17 you designate it as a strategic base of presence in the  
18 north central U.S. for assignment of the emerging mission  
19 now identified as the unmanned aerial vehicle.

20 Further, we recommend you consider Ellsworth for  
21 the basing of tanker missions, which being realigned from  
22 the region or retained for basing of the C2ISR or space  
23 missions, in which it ranks 5th and 10th respectively in  
24 MCI scoring.

25 The basis of our recommendations are, first, the

1 Air Force recommendation to consolidate all B-1 aircraft at  
2 one base with one runway violates Air Force Principle #7,  
3 as contained in Department of the Air Force Analysis and  
4 Recommendations BRAC 2005, Volume V, part 1 of 2, Air Force  
5 Basing Considerations 1.7.1.7, "Insure long range strike  
6 bases provide flexible strategic response and strategic  
7 force protection."

8 Number two, in contrast, the Air Force has not  
9 recommended the consolidation of any other legacy aircraft  
10 principle.

11 Three, Air Force officials have testified to the  
12 Commission that Ellsworth's current bomber mission  
13 capability has diminished by training range access.  
14 However, the metric on which the measurement is based does  
15 not consider the quality of the training available on the  
16 range or the average sortie time required to accomplish  
17 identical mission requirements.

18 Fourth, Ellsworth Powder River MOA is seven to  
19 eight minutes from Ellsworth's runway, and it has a ground  
20 or surface to unlimited ceiling operation area, and allows  
21 a training mission to be flown in a duration of 3.8 hours  
22 verses the same mission flown at the proposed consolidation  
23 base, which has less vertical space and requires an  
24 additional 0.7 hours of flight time. The result will be  
25 less quality training at an estimated additional \$14,000

1 dollars per mission.

2 Five, as the aircraft assigned to Ellsworth  
3 constituted 82 percent, or 686 of 832 of the missions flown  
4 in the Powder River MOA in the past year, and the Air Force  
5 has stated its intent to maintain the Powder River MOA,  
6 either it will continue to be used as the primary B-1 MOA,  
7 or be grossly underutilized. If the B-1B missions from the  
8 consolidated base use the range in the future, the added  
9 cost per mission is estimated at \$100,000, an estimated  
10 \$68.6 million annual cost, or a \$1.3 billion, over \$3  
11 billion cost over the next 20 years.

12 Six, the Air Force's recommendation to assign the  
13 unmanned aerial vehicle mission to a strategic base of  
14 presence in the north central U.S. other than Ellsworth Air  
15 Force Base is inconsistent with the findings of the  
16 environmental assessment for Global Hawk main operating  
17 base bed down as determined by the March 2001, Air Combat  
18 Command finding that our Ellsworth Air Force Base is the  
19 only base in the region suited for the mission.

20 Seven, the Air Force recommendation to realign  
21 tanker assets to bases ranked lower than Ellsworth's fifth  
22 position in tanker MCI scoring is inconsistent with the  
23 Military Value Criteria #1, current and future mission  
24 capability.

25 Number eight, an analysis of the Air Force MCI

1 rating of the three bases positioned to be retained as a  
2 strategic base of presence in the north central U.S., rated  
3 Ellsworth first in six of eight categories: bomber,  
4 aircraft, tanker, fighter, C2ISR, and space. Each of the  
5 other bases only ranked first in one category each, and  
6 point of fact, Ellsworth ranked no lower than second in the  
7 other two categories. Accordingly, the recommendation to  
8 close Ellsworth Air Force Base is inconsistent with  
9 Military Value Criteria #1, as it relates to future mission  
10 capability.

11 Before our Governor, Mike Rounds, closes our  
12 testimony, I would like to recap the salient points with  
13 which General Mike Loh opened our testimony.

14 First, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
15 Criteria #1 in recommending the consolidation of  
16 Ellsworth's consistently higher rate, rated B-1 operations  
17 at a base that maintains a lesser operation readiness rate,  
18 thereby impacting training, readiness, and war fighting.

19 Second, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
20 Criteria #2, in that the recommended closure of Ellsworth  
21 will relocate the aircraft that constitutes 82 percent of  
22 the use of immediately adjacent airspace, Powder River MOA,  
23 to a base at least two hours flight time away; thereby,  
24 either increasing operational costs or reducing mission  
25 effectiveness.

1 Third, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
2 Criteria #3, in that the reduced use of the Powder River  
3 MOA will either increase the cost of operations per mission  
4 flown from out of the area, or cause it to be abandoned for  
5 use by future total force requirements.

6 Fourth, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
7 Criteria #4, in that the cost to operate the entire B-1  
8 fleet will exceed the cost of maintaining two bases, each  
9 of which has the capacity to accept future forced bed  
10 downs.

11 Fifth, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
12 Criteria #6, in that of the three bases in the north  
13 central U.S. considered for the strategic presence  
14 retention, the recommended closure of Ellsworth will  
15 eliminate the most highly rated base for realigning tanker  
16 aircraft for the bed down of future forced missions, such  
17 as unmanned aerial vehicles, C2ISR, or emerging missions  
18 such as the airborne laser.

19 Six, the Air Force substantially deviated from  
20 Criteria #6, in that of the three bases in the north  
21 central U.S. considered for strategic presence retention,  
22 the recommended closure of Ellsworth will more severely  
23 impact the existing community and its vicinity than the one  
24 being recommended for retention for an emerging mission.

25 And seven, the Air Force substantially deviated

1 from Criteria #7, in that the recommended closure of  
2 Ellsworth will relocate the B-1B assets to a base that has  
3 lesser current plant replacement value, and will have a  
4 lesser infrastructure and overall capacity even after the  
5 proposed facility projects identified for construction are  
6 completed.

7 Commissioners, as we conclude our testimony  
8 before you, I would like to present to you one of the few  
9 Governors who has flown the B-1 bomber as it was put  
10 through the paces in our Powder River MOA. He knows of  
11 what he speaks, and is closely associated with our state's  
12 National Guard as any Governor could possibly be.

13 Commissioners, Governor Mike Rounds of South  
14 Dakota.

15 (Applause.)

16 GOVERNOR ROUNDS: Chairman Skinner, Commissioner  
17 Bilbray, and Commissioner Coyle, first let me say thank you  
18 to you for taking the time to come out to South Dakota and  
19 visiting with us. We all appreciate your hard work and the  
20 extra efforts that you are making to thoroughly understand  
21 the Defense Department's recommendations, and the nation's  
22 response to them. The time you have spent visiting  
23 Ellsworth and listening to us is very, very much  
24 appreciated.

25 As Governor, it has been my privilege to meet the

1 men and women who fly the B-1 and provide all the support  
2 that keeps these bombers in top condition to defend our  
3 country. I know firsthand how professional and  
4 conscientious they are. There aren't enough words in the  
5 dictionary to describe how proud we are of them and the  
6 work they do for us. We are grateful to have them living  
7 and working here in South Dakota. We appreciate them more  
8 than you can imagine.

9 With this morning's base visit and the testimony  
10 presented to you this afternoon, I believe you have the  
11 information that you need to conclude that the Air Force  
12 and the Secretary of Defense substantially deviated from  
13 the Military Value Criteria required to recommend a base  
14 for closure. Internal Air Force evaluations clearly show  
15 that Ellsworth Air Force Base has the infrastructure and  
16 other qualities needed to be the only B-1 base, but the  
17 argument should not be one base verses another. The bottom  
18 line is that for the defense of our people, America needs  
19 the B-1 on more than one base so the B-1 is not vulnerable  
20 to a single attack or a natural disaster.

21 (Applause.)

22 GOVERNOR ROUNDS: The B-1 dropped over 40 percent  
23 of the munitions in Afghanistan, and 30 percent of the  
24 munitions in the initial push in Iraq. The B-1's vital  
25 mission of defending and protecting Americans should not be

1 placed in jeopardy by deploying it on only one base that  
2 has only one useable runway for this bomber. America needs  
3 two bases and two runways.

4 We also need more than one base and more than one  
5 useable runway so that natural disasters, storms, weather,  
6 and other things that temporarily close a base don't cause  
7 a delay in our B-1s responding to a call for immediate  
8 action.

9 Hickam Field and battleship row at Pearl Harbor,  
10 Clark Field in the Philippines all on the same day. They  
11 were all concentrations of resources in just one place  
12 which allowed the enemy to successfully attack us. The  
13 proposed consolidation of 65 or more B-1s at one base  
14 brings into question the entire assessment process that  
15 refuses to recognize the need for redundancy in protecting  
16 this country. When the principles of redundancy have not  
17 been followed, our nation and other nations have suffered  
18 terribly. Therefore, please don't allow this principle to  
19 be abandoned. Looking through the factors that led to the  
20 recommendation to put all the B-1s at one base, why wasn't  
21 the importance of redundancy a factor? How many points  
22 would Ellsworth and other bases have gained if the  
23 importance of redundancy for this and other vital weapon  
24 systems had been recognized and found in the scoring  
25 system?

1           Gentlemen, I am not a military planner, but if  
2           you ask a veteran of Pearl Harbor, if you asked a commander  
3           in the Korean War, or if you asked a helicopter pilot who  
4           flew in Vietnam, or if you asked any of our soldiers from  
5           the Gulf and Iraqi Wars - and believe me they're, they are  
6           here today with us - or if you asked the moms and the dads  
7           of those soldiers - and they're here with us today too - I  
8           don't think any one of them would tell you that it's a good  
9           idea to put all our bombers in one location instead of two.

10           (Applause.)

11           GOVERNOR ROUNDS: Gentlemen, the Air Force also  
12           erred when it testified on May 17th that Ellsworth could  
13           not handle all the B-1B aircraft. In fact, Ellsworth has  
14           the space to house 71 large aircraft. The Air Force also  
15           underestimated the total square footage of the available  
16           ramp space by 20 percent.

17           Gentlemen, we're not asking for Ellsworth to be  
18           the only B-1 base. We believe that America needs two  
19           bases, not one, for the B-1 to successfully accomplish its  
20           mission. Even though the Defense Department wants to close  
21           Ellsworth, the Air Force, we believe, will still want to  
22           continue the use of its ground and airspace presence in an  
23           estimated 320,000 square miles of the upper great plains.  
24           From north of us in Montana all the way south of us into  
25           Nebraska, this airspace is some of the most open and

1 uncluttered airspace in the United States, and it's only  
2 seven or eight minutes flight time from Ellsworth. I had  
3 the opportunity to be there.

4 In your difficult deliberations, you are  
5 evaluating sites for both current and future missions.  
6 Many future missions will included joint active reserve  
7 component operations, as expressed by the Air Force in its  
8 May 17th testimony. I believe the people of this region  
9 can provide the personnel needed for a blended wing, excuse  
10 me, a blended wing of B-1 aircraft, as well as enough  
11 personnel for any other future missions. The South Dakota  
12 Army National Guard is at 96 percent of its authorized  
13 strength, and has a retention rate of 87 percent. The  
14 South Dakota Air National Guard is at 102 percent of its  
15 authorized strength and has a 95 percent retention rate.  
16 Both of them rank in the top five in comparison to the  
17 other 54 states and territories in recruiting, retention,  
18 and attrition measurements. We want to participate in  
19 joint active reserve operations.

20 In summary, the Department of Defense's  
21 recommendation to close Ellsworth puts a critical national  
22 defense mission into a vulnerable position where all the  
23 B-1s could be destroyed by a single attack or a natural  
24 disaster, or they could be delayed in responding by  
25 something as simple as bad weather.

1           The recommendation also ignores the capacity of  
2 both bases to continue the B-1 mission and to perform  
3 additional future missions. The Defense Department also  
4 ignores the desires of people in this region to serve in  
5 joint active reserve missions.

6           I strongly recommend that you reject the  
7 recommendation to close Ellsworth. I hope --

8           (Applause.)

9           GOVERNOR ROUNDS: I hope that you will direct the  
10 current B-1s to provide redundancy in our total B-1  
11 mission. I would also ask that you consider adding new  
12 missions at Ellsworth to fully utilize the base's  
13 underreported capacity.

14           Gentlemen, nobody's perfect. This Defense  
15 Department recommendation to close Ellsworth is a mistake.  
16 But it's a mistake made by good people who are trying their  
17 best to do a good job. But now, as part of this process,  
18 you have the opportunity to correct it. For the defense  
19 and protection of the people of America, we hope that this  
20 BRAC Commission will correct this mistake.

21           I said earlier that we welcomed you to South  
22 Dakota. We know the type of a battle, the type of a  
23 challenge that we have in asking changes to be made, and we  
24 understand as some people said, it's an uphill challenge.  
25 We're looking at a mountain in front of us to climb, but in

1 this state, mountains don't scare us. This is a state  
2 where people look at a mountain and they carve it, and not  
3 just a little bit, but the whole thing.

4 (Applause.)

5 GOVERNOR ROUNDS: I'd like to add just one more  
6 thing. As the Commander in Chief of South Dakota's Army  
7 and Air National Guards, I am grateful for the B-1's  
8 reliability and effectiveness in killing the enemy and  
9 pushing the enemy back to minimize the face-to-face combat  
10 that our South Dakota soldiers have encountered overseas.  
11 Our B-1s should not be put in a vulnerable position that  
12 might allow all of them to be destroyed or delayed in  
13 responding to protect our soldiers on the ground.

14 (Applause.)

15 GOVERNOR ROUNDS: Gentlemen, if that happens, we  
16 are less protected here at home, and so, too, are the  
17 soldiers that we send from our hometowns to fight our  
18 enemies in foreign lands.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 COLONEL MCKEON: Chairman Skinner, Commissioner  
22 Bilbray, and Commissioner Coyle, as we prepared for this  
23 hearing, we came to realize that it would be both complex  
24 and lengthy. The delayed release of information hampered  
25 us in preparing a more concise argument, and for that we

1 apologize. We would have liked to have more time to do so,  
2 but we realize that you are on an accelerated schedule, and  
3 we believed it was best for you to visit Ellsworth Air  
4 Force Base and to be with us here in Rapid City. We deeply  
5 appreciate the courtesies you've extended to us, the  
6 endurance you have exhibited, and your acceptance of the  
7 monumental task placed before you. We will obviously be in  
8 contact with your staff members in the coming weeks as we  
9 are able to analyze the additional data, and make our  
10 arguments available to you as needed. We're also available  
11 to you at any time, should you have any questions. Feel  
12 free to contact the Ellsworth Task Force or any of our  
13 elected officials. Again, thank you for your service to  
14 our country.

15 This concludes our presentation, but since this  
16 is a regional meeting, a representative, Mr. Rip Hawkins,  
17 from the Crook County, Wyoming, representing the county  
18 commissioners, will now make his presentation. But General  
19 Counsel Cowhig, I don't believe he was sworn in with the  
20 original ones, just for your technical references, and then  
21 I understand we'll stand for questions after his  
22 presentation.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman and the Commissioners,  
25 I certainly didn't save the best for last. I'll say that

1 part.

2 (Witness sworn by Mr. Daniel Cowhig, Deputy  
3 General Counsel.)

4 MR. HAWKINS: I did this earlier when you did the  
5 other ones. I was in the back, so now you've sworn me  
6 twice. I'm getting all kinds of instructions up here.

7 Thank you for allowing me to appear and speak to  
8 you on behalf of the citizens of Crook County. We're in  
9 the northeast corner of the state of Wyoming and we border  
10 not only South Dakota, but Montana, and we have interest  
11 over here including the Air Force Base and also the Super  
12 Kmart which is over in --

13 There are two major concerns. The first is a  
14 question of continuing monitoring of abandoned nuclear  
15 radio, radar station outside of Sundance, Wyoming. At the  
16 present time, the people use Ellsworth as a base for their  
17 operations, and we just want to make sure that they have a  
18 continuing base of operations to do their test for  
19 radioactive material in our area.

20 The second concern is for the veterans in our  
21 county who continue to use the facility for various  
22 services, and in a number of cases, a lack of access to  
23 that facility such as Ellsworth will cause them some  
24 hardship, financial hardship. We just want to make sure  
25 that this issue is considered in the decision making

1 process either to close or not to close the base.

2 On a personal note, I'd like to say that as I  
3 grew up in Tennessee in the 50s and 60s and 40s, and in the  
4 Cold War, Ellsworth Air Force Base was my homeland  
5 security, if you want to know the truth, even that far  
6 south. Sometimes in our government's effort to make  
7 financial expedient decisions, we lose sight of sometimes  
8 what is symbolic to our nation.

9 Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote a poem one time  
10 called Old Ironsides. He did so in order to save an old  
11 wooden revolution area ship that symbolized the strength of  
12 the nation at the time. I'd like to quote you about the  
13 first verse of that. It goes, "Ay, tear her tattered  
14 ensign down! Long has it waived on high, and many an eye  
15 has danced to see that banner in the sky." I think  
16 Ellsworth itself symbolizes what our nation stands for in  
17 its ability to respond, and I myself personally, and I  
18 think most of the people here in South Dakota, would like  
19 to see that flag still flying at Ellsworth.

20 Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 COLONEL MCKEON: Commissioners, we now stand  
23 ready to answer any questions that you might have.

24 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Thank you, Colonel McKeon, for  
25 organizing this outstanding presentation, and by not only

1 from the people of South Dakota, but also from Wyoming.

2 I have a couple of questions. We obviously have  
3 spent the day discussing a number of issues you brought up,  
4 so we won't be asking all the questions that we might have,  
5 because many of them we had answered this morning, or at  
6 least we understand the question and we may not have the  
7 answers yet, and our staff will be dedicated to getting  
8 into it.

9 I have one question and maybe two. One question,  
10 and I guess I'll go to you, General Wolfe, but I think  
11 Colonel McKeon or Colonel McElgunn could do it as well. I  
12 wonder if you could, you all or several of you referred to  
13 operational readiness scores, and the contrast between the  
14 operational readiness scores, what they are and the  
15 differentiation between those scores that have been  
16 achieved by Ellsworth as compared to other bomber bases,  
17 and I wonder if you could elaborate on that a little more.  
18 That is not something we discussed this morning.

19 COLONEL MCKEON: Colonel McElgunn will answer  
20 that.

21 COLONEL MCELGUNN: Chairman Skinner, in the  
22 comparison, which we really prefer not to be involved in,  
23 in our operational readiness rates, we have been told by  
24 base people for many years that based on the focus of the  
25 mission at Ellsworth, particularly the B-1, that they can

1 maintain a higher mission capable rate than they can at a  
2 dual mission base where they're being located.

3 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Let me rephrase the question  
4 so you'll feel more comfortable.

5 Is it fair to say that the Air Force maintains on  
6 a regular basis operational readiness scores for all its  
7 units and keeps those in a central depository, and would be  
8 available to the staff if they were asked, and I see you're  
9 passing it to your former boss there.

10 Go ahead, General Wolfe.

11 GENERAL WOLFE: I would, I think the simple  
12 answer is yes, whether it's in the maintenance area for  
13 mission capable rates, whether it's operational readiness  
14 rates, whether it's the kind of things that our units  
15 report in their, what used to be called combat readiness  
16 status reporting system, so that should be available. Some  
17 of it may be classified.

18 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Well, maybe, Colonel McElgunn,  
19 between the four of you, you can put on a piece of paper  
20 for us just stuff that's not classified; just the type,  
21 what the name is, not what the actual ratings are, what the  
22 names are. I think that would be interesting because I  
23 assumed as part of that, time to mission and deployment to  
24 mission would be a key criteria of that, so I'd like to see  
25 that.

1 MR. MCELGUNN: We'd be happy to get that to you.

2 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: I'm not surprised that  
3 Ellsworth is very high, but I'd like to see it as it  
4 compares to everybody else.

5 Commissioner Bilbray.

6 COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 First of all, I feel like Mo Udall, that  
8 everything has been said, but everybody hasn't said it, and  
9 I'd like to say that you put on a wonderful presentation.  
10 I enjoyed being here in South Dakota, especially with my  
11 good friend Senator Johnson, who I came into Congress with  
12 a number of years ago. He is a good friend, both him and  
13 his wife, and I'll remember that. And I would like to say,  
14 though --

15 (Applause.)

16 COMMISSIONER BILBRAY: I'd like, one other  
17 comment I'd like to make to our presider here, please call  
18 it Nevada, not Nevada.

19 (Laughter.)

20 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Congressman Coyle.

21 COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 I have a couple questions, and let me say also  
23 how much we appreciate all the effort you've put into our  
24 visit this morning at the base and here for this hearing.  
25 We know it's not easy to organize such an effort.

1 I'm not sure who should take this question.  
2 Anybody who wants. It's been mentioned that Ellsworth has  
3 close access to its training range, the Powder River  
4 military operational area, seven or eight minutes, and we  
5 understand why that's important. Could somebody say  
6 something more about why it's important to have such access  
7 for a low level training?

8 GENERAL WOLFE: Is the essence of your question  
9 that we do so much of our bombing now at high altitude?

10 COMMISSIONER COYLE: As I understand it, part of  
11 the B-1 mission is to do work at low level as well as at  
12 high levels, and if you don't have access for low level  
13 training, that's a disadvantage. I was hoping that  
14 somebody could explain why the low level training is  
15 important itself.

16 GENERAL WOLFE: I would be glad to do that.  
17 Training at high altitude, bombing at high altitude is  
18 considerably different than when they're operating at low  
19 level: A different kind of returns, different kinds of  
20 challenges for the crew, the importance of terrain  
21 avoidance and that kind of thing that is not a factor at  
22 high altitude. To have access to ranges close by that let  
23 you descend and go low is important.

24 One of the nice things I think about the Powder  
25 River MOA is that it's close by. They can get in. They

1 can go low and they can really do that without having to  
2 air refuel, for example, on every mission. It used to be  
3 that you had to, if you were of much greater distance from  
4 your military operating area or your low level route, or  
5 because you needed more air refueling training, you would  
6 have to refuel with tankers on each mission. They don't  
7 have to do that, and I'd be happy to respond to a follow on  
8 if I haven't gotten to the essence of your question.

9 COMMISSIONER COYLE: And would you say that  
10 Ellsworth's access to, close access to low level training  
11 is a unique asset?

12 GENERAL WOLFE: Nationally, it wouldn't  
13 necessarily be unique, but it is certainly an important  
14 positive asset for Ellsworth.

15 COMMISSIONER COYLE: Is there another B-1 base  
16 that has closer access for low level training.

17 GENERAL WOLFE: No, there is not. Thank you for  
18 the question.

19 COLONEL MCKEON: Mr. Coyle, you're leading the  
20 witness.

21 (Laughter.)

22 COMMISSIONER COYLE: Maybe just one more  
23 question. When we were out visiting the base, we asked  
24 what the base operating support costs were and we were told  
25 that when you add up, you know, things like keeping the

1 lights on and the heat on and maintenance on the base and  
2 those sorts of things, it's something like \$20 million a  
3 year; that's not counting amortizing, military  
4 construction, which we understand is nice when you get it,  
5 and some years you don't. But the Department of Defense  
6 says that the annual recurring savings from closing  
7 Ellsworth Air Force Base is \$161.3 million. Could somebody  
8 explain to me how you can save more than you spend?

9 (Laughter and applause.)

10 COLONEL MCELGUNN: I cannot explain that in terms  
11 of my personal finances. I think it's explainable in terms  
12 of the macro that they try and justify. Let me suggest  
13 that their costs that include, also include the personnel  
14 costs that would be in the base operating support package.  
15 I think regarding your question regarding utilities, in  
16 what I had mentioned earlier in testimony regarding the  
17 water availability, you know, the electricity availability  
18 and the gas availability, they are very innovative in terms  
19 of what they have done over the years. They have reduced  
20 their costs. Personnel costs are fairly constant,  
21 obviously, in terms of maintaining a physical plant.

22 One of the interesting other contrasts, as I sat  
23 in the room with you on the 17th of May, the issue came up  
24 of the number of people that are being left in the guard  
25 and reserve units without aircraft was that they needed the

1 people for deployment. They cited specifically that in the  
2 peak of the Afghan/Iraq operations, they were operating 34  
3 locations overseas. They're down to about a dozen or so  
4 now.

5 I think you have to look at the BOS issue in  
6 terms of the perspective of total force requirements over  
7 time, under the assumption that you may have another  
8 crises, it may be a two theater crises, and you will have  
9 to have the people. So to discount it off and say we can  
10 save a significant amount of money by closing the base, not  
11 only do you give up the facility forever - I've been to a  
12 lot that closed; none never really opened, and the people  
13 are then casted off and they're not available to you in the  
14 next round. I think the Air Force's estimate, as I recall,  
15 their description was to reduce force structure by 30,000  
16 people as a result of this effort. I may be off a little  
17 bit there, but that's probably where you see the  
18 differential in cost between the 20 and higher number for  
19 BOS.

20 COLONEL MCKEON: For the executive summary, I  
21 would say that we, too, are confused with some of the  
22 numbers, and we will analyze those over the next few weeks  
23 and provide you additional detail on some of the other  
24 things we find disparities with.

25 COMMISSIONER COYLE: As I understand it, the Air

1 Force is not proposing to cut the B-1 fleet in half  
2 nationwide, nor have they proposed to reduce personnel and  
3 strength numbers nationwide, so if we're going to have the  
4 same number of B-1s no matter where they're operated, it's  
5 going to take pilots and maintainers and facilities to  
6 support them; is that your understanding?

7 COLONEL MCELGUNN: Yes, sir, that's a true  
8 statement. In the BOS arena, though, I think what they're  
9 looking at is just if you took, let's say, a thousand  
10 people to operate an installation and you closed the  
11 installation and you moved the mission, this is another  
12 2,000 people that are evacuated to combat the portion of  
13 it, the front end of the spear, you may only need to move  
14 500 people to the new location. What they have would claim  
15 is they would have a differential of 500 to be able to do  
16 the same mission. The question is: Can the new place do  
17 the mission? Does it have the physical plant to do it?  
18 Will you have to invest to get it done? Do you have the  
19 air quality? All the other things you need to obtain. But  
20 I think if you look at the number - and we will go back and  
21 examine that for you - in terms of what we understand in  
22 Ellsworth, is that part of their savings is a reduction of  
23 the BOS personnel support cost.

24 COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Well, seeing no other

1 questions, let me again thank the people that have helped  
2 us prepare for this hearing, which is soon to come to a  
3 close. I want to thank all the witnesses for testifying  
4 today. We had the opportunity to spend all day with your  
5 governor and your only representative and your two  
6 senators, and Mayor, I was going to ask a question: That  
7 voice on the video, was that your voice on the video?

8 MAYOR SHAW: Yes, it is.

9 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: Well, I must tell you, a good  
10 friend of mine is Jim Manson. It sounded like him, so you  
11 have a great career coming up if don't get reelected as  
12 mayor.

13 (Laughter and applause.)

14 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: You've all brought us a very,  
15 very thoughtful information. You'll have the ability to  
16 continue to provide it to our staff. The BRAC staff here  
17 is a very competent staff. Many of them have a lot of  
18 experiences in BRAC, so I want everybody to know that the  
19 future of Ellsworth is in very good hands from an  
20 analytical and judgment basis because we have a lot of  
21 experience on our staff that we're able to recruit from the  
22 past, and we're going to rely on them very heavily, so keep  
23 that ongoing dialogue coming.

24 I also want to thank the citizens who came out.  
25 I'm glad it didn't rain quite as hard. You obviously have

1 a very special spirit here.

2 On a personal note, I want to point out that I  
3 learned first of this support and spirit firsthand a number  
4 of years ago when I developed a close, personal  
5 relationship with former Congressional Medal of Honor  
6 winner and former Governor, and the first commander of the  
7 Air National Guard, Joe Foss.

8 (Applause.)

9 CHAIRMAN SKINNER: I think he'd be very proud of  
10 all of you today. It is clear from the visit today that  
11 the spirit, the dedication to our country that was  
12 demonstrated by Joe in World War II is continuing to be  
13 demonstrated today. Thank you.

14 COLONEL MCKEON: Ladies and gentlemen, please  
15 rise for the departure of our distinguished visitors.

16 (Proceedings adjourned at 3:20 p.m.)  
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1 STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA )

:SS

CERTIFICATE

2 COUNTY OF BROWN )

3

4 I, Kristi A. Kost, Notary Public and Court Reporter in  
5 the above-named County and State, do certify that I  
6 reported in stenotype the proceedings of the foregoing  
7 matter; that I thereafter transcribed said stenotype notes  
8 into typewriting; that the foregoing pages, 1-87,  
9 inclusive, are a true, full and correct transcription of my  
10 stenotype notes.

11 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I hereto set my hand and  
12 official seal this 27th day of June, 2005.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristi A. Kost

20

Court Reporter

My Commission Expires:

21

February 21, 2007

