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U.S. House of Representatives

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

July 23, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The most recent round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), begun in 2005 and completed in September 2011, did not obtain all the goals desired by the Department of Defense. However, over the past six months appointees in your Administration have indicated that they would like two further rounds of BRAC to continue the dismantlement of the nation's defense facilities.

- The *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices* document from January 2012 states that your administration "will request that Congress authorize use of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process with a goal of identifying efficient savings that can be reinvested in higher priorities as soon as possible."
- In testimony before the House Armed Services committee from February 15, 2012, Secretary Panetta indicated that "As we reduce force structure, we have a responsibility to provide the most cost efficient support for the force. For that reason, the President will request that Congress authorize the Base Realignment and Closure process for 2013 and 2015."
- In testimony from March 8, 2012 before the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee, which I Chair, Dr. Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment) said that the Department of Defense is "asking for additional BRAC rounds [...] Only through BRAC can we align our infrastructure with our defense strategy."
- In April 2012, your Office of Management and Budget delivered legislative proposals requesting another two rounds of Base Realignment and Closure to the House Armed Services Committee.

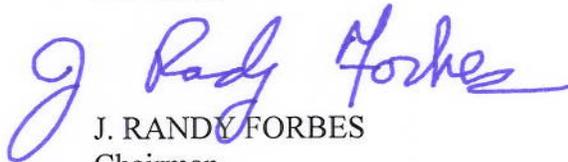
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The result of the 2005 BRAC round having cost \$31 billion – more than the four previous BRAC rounds combined -- but yielding an annual net recurring savings of only \$4 billion, does not seem like a reasonable approach to achieving infrastructure savings. With the unfulfilled goals of BRAC 2005, with changes in military force structure and end strength still being debated as we withdraw forces from Southwest Asia, and with budgetary considerations so much in flux that we are still uncertain about the resources that will be available to support military infrastructure requirements, our committee rejected the Administration's request this year for another two rounds of Base Realignment and Closure.

Therefore, we were pleased to see your statement in Hampton Roads, Virginia, on July 15, 2012, that you “don't think now is the time for BRAC; we just went through some base closings, and the strategy that we have does not call for that.” However, your statement is inconsistent with those from Secretary Panetta, other members of your administration and budget documentation that all requested another two rounds of Base Realignment and Closure.

The anxiety at military installations and the associated communities has been significant following the Administration's initial request earlier this year for another two rounds of Base Realignment and Closure. We would appreciate if you could confirm that the Administration at this time is no longer seeking to close additional military installations. This affirmation would go a long way to reducing the concern at many military installations.

Sincerely,



J. RANDY FORBES
Chairman
Subcommittee on Readiness

JRF:ds