

## August 24 2005 - Rep. Slaughter in Contact with BRAC Commission During Final Discussions

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Buffalo-Niagara Communities Await Decision on Future of NFARS

Washington - Rep. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, has had discussions with Commissioner James Bilbray and has contacted other members of the BRAC Commission during the final hours of the body's review of its list of proposed based realignments and closures.

"The people of the Buffalo and Niagara communities should be proud of our efforts to save our base, whatever the Commission decides," Rep. Slaughter said. "I believe we have made a strong case and clearly shown the commissioners just how important the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is to our regional and national security," she added. "Though the final outcome may not be all we hope for, I feel optimistic that the Commission will see the value of NFARS and will act to save the base in Niagara Falls."

Rep. Slaughter will be traveling to Washington to attend the BRAC Commission Hearing in anticipation of its consideration of NFARS. The Commission is expected to consider and vote on NFARS sometime tomorrow or Friday morning.

Rep. Slaughter will be attending the BRAC Commission hearing in person and will be available to the media immediately before and after the Commission considers NFARS.

To schedule an interview in advance please call:

Eric Burns at 202-225-8415 or Karl Frisch at 202-225-7300

Backgrounder:

Rep. Slaughter's Work for Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS)

- In 2004, Rep. Slaughter helped to secure \$7.8 million for the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Fire and Crash Rescue Station.

- Rep. Slaughter initiated dialogue with the United States Coast Guard to explore the possibility of permanently stationing several Coast Guard aircraft at NFARS to assist with their Homeland Security missions in the region. She led a delegation letter to Admiral Collins on this issue, and personally met with him to lobby for a permanent Coast Guard facility.

- In late 2002, Rep. Slaughter hosted Rep. Skelton, ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, at NFARS. She introduced him to Niagara Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) officials to see the strong community support for the base.

- Before the BRAC process started, Rep. Slaughter sent a letter with the delegation to Department of Defense officials asking them to visit the base.

- Last May, Rep. Slaughter voted for Amendment 213 to H.R. 1815, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, which sought to postpone the base realignment and closure process until one year after a number of studies are completed and until one year after the troops have returned home from the Iraqi theater.

- The same month, Rep. Slaughter introduced H.R. 2641, bipartisan legislation that would require the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to take into consideration the homeland security contributions and value of military installations when the Commission conducts its review and analysis of the list of military installations recommended for closure or realignment by the Secretary of Defense. Congresswoman Slaughter also offered this legislation as an amendment to H.R. 1815 in the Rules Committee.

- Rep. Slaughter later introduced H.R. 2733 - legislation which would prohibit the closure or adverse realignment of facilities of the reserve components that the Secretary of Homeland Security determines have a significant role in homeland defense. Congresswoman Slaughter also offered this legislation as an amendment to H.R. 1815 in the Rules Committee.

- Rep. Slaughter co-signed a bipartisan letter to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld reminding him that the Defense Department must release the full set of detailed data on which its BRAC decisions were based. Though the Department had transmitted its recommendations and summaries at that point, it had not yet released installation-specific data, such as data indicating how it derived military value scores for each installation. The Department's failure to provide this data severely disadvantaged the BRAC Commission and the affected communities.

- Last June, Commissioner Bilbray accepted Rep. Slaughter's offer to participate in the Commission's site-visit to NFARS and attend the BRAC Regional Hearing. Congresswoman Slaughter and Commissioner Bilbray met for dinner

prior to the public hearing to discuss NFARS.

- Rep. Slaughter met with BRAC Commission Chairman Principi, and Commissioner's Turner, Newton, and Bilbray. Congresswoman Slaughter testified at the BRAC Regional hearing on the importance of NFARS to homeland defense operations, the consequences of further military withdrawal from the Northeast, and the erroneous cost-savings under NFAR's COBRA analysis.

- Congresswoman Slaughter wrote to the Department of Homeland Security to learn the extent that the Department of Defense consulted with the Department of Homeland Security during the BRAC process.

- Congresswoman Slaughter wrote to the BRAC Commission regarding the DoD's new "Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support." In the strategy, the DoD lists several acknowledges the need to take a more active role in homeland defense operations and support of first-responders. Congresswoman Slaughter pointed out how several of the DoD's new objectives for homeland defense are already carried out at NFARS.