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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Defense Department Makes Project a Priority for Fiscal Year 2008

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today announced that the United States Army Reserve has agreed to her request to begin work on a \$30 million Regional Readiness Center at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in Fiscal Year 2008. The size and significance of the project, in addition to the large financial commitment the Army Reserve is making to it, suggest that any future Defense Department attempts to close the base will be extremely unlikely.

"The Center is going to bring long-term, quality jobs to the region, and make this base indispensable to the Department of Defense," Rep. Slaughter said. "This decision means a brighter future for this base, for our region, and for the state of our national security."

"Today's announcement is a three-for-one deal," the Congresswoman continued. "We are bringing a major construction job to the region, ensuring that NFARS will become an even more permanent part of our community, and opening the door for exciting redevelopment opportunities at the airport."

"We're going to keep growing the base in the near future, and I am working to bring additional planes, more missions,

and greater responsibilities for the Air National Guard unit," Rep. Slaughter said. "I'm proud to know that the Reserve Base will be part of our community for a long time to come."

BACKGROUND

The BRAC Commission authorized hundreds of military construction projects to be completed at bases around the country. But given the intense competition for a scarce amount of money, Rep. Slaughter persuaded the Army Reserve to begin the \$30 million project in FY 2008. The Defense Department released budget documents late-Friday afternoon that confirm the Regional Readiness Center is a 2008 priority for the Army.

In February, Rep. Slaughter received a commitment from the Army Reserve Chief of Installations, Colonel Danny Nobles, that the Army would build the Regional Readiness Center on the military side of the base. Army operations are currently functional on the commercial side of the base. Relocating the Army to the military side will increase the base's value and make it next to impossible for the Defense Department to justify closing it in future BRAC rounds. In addition, once the Army Reserve vacates the commercial side of the base, the land can be used for prime redevelopment opportunities at the Niagara Falls Airport.

Rep. Slaughter will be meeting with the Chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. General James Helmly, on Wednesday to thank him for working with her to finalize the \$30 million project. The Undersecretary of the Army, Peter Geren, has also accepted Rep. Slaughter's invitation to visit the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station within the next year.

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