

## May 17, 2007 - Rep. Slaughter Secures Provisions to Improve and Expand the Niagara Air Force Base

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today announced that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (HR 1585) included language she authored that will improve and expand the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 17, 2007

Rep. Slaughter Secures Provisions to Improve and Expand the Niagara Air Force Base in Defense Authorization Bill

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today announced that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (HR 1585) included language she authored that will improve and expand the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base.

At Rep. Slaughter's request, the House Armed Services Committee listed the Niagara Air Base as an "Item of Special Interest" in their committee report. The Committee report directs the Air Force to give the 914th Air Reserve unit a new Explosive Ordnance Disposal mission (EOD) and the airbase a new dining hall beginning in next year's defense budget.

Additionally, the House of Representatives passed an amendment authored by Rep. Slaughter that will require the Secretary of the Air Force to determine the future number of airplanes at the base by December of this year. Rep. Slaughter's amendment requires the Air Force to develop a comprehensive way-forward and future roadmap for Niagara in the next six months.

The bill passed the House today by a vote of 397 - 27.

"Since BRAC ended in 2005, I have been working aggressively to expand the Niagara Air Base to ensure that it remains a vital part of Western New York's community and an essential component of our national defense for years to come," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "Today's bill sets the stage to bring two new military construction projects to the base in the coming years. What's more, my amendment will require the Pentagon to determine Niagara's long-term role in the Air Force by years end."

"The citizens of Western New York have long understood the tremendous value of the Niagara Air Base, and I will continue to do all that I can at the federal level to promote and assist our unique reserve station and to help maintain it as an asset to the community," Rep. Slaughter added.

Merrell A. Lane, Chairman of the Niagara Military Affairs Council also added, "NIMAC is very pleased with the announcement today by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter regarding the provision which she has secured in the Defense Authorization bill concerning the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. Through the hard work of the Congresswoman, the future of the base looks even brighter."

The Niagara Military Affairs Council pledged that they will continue to work closely with Congress and the Air Force on behalf of the Base.

BACKGROUND:

Today's announcement continues the aggressive push by Rep. Slaughter to make certain that the Niagara Air Base remains vital to our national defense. Earlier this year, Rep. Slaughter secured a commitment from now-Secretary of the Army Peter Geren to construct a new \$27 million Army Regional Readiness Center at the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve Station. This project was included in the President's FY 2008 budget.

With this facility comes the need to build a new and modern dining hall at the air base. The language in the bill passed today will allow the airbase to receive funds next year for the new dining hall. The hall is estimated to cost between six and seven million dollars.

The legislation passed today will allow the base to receive design funds for the EOD facility in next year's defense budget, with approximately \$7 million in construction money to follow in fiscal year 2010.

While the airbase was removed from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), BRAC did require that the 107th Guard unit associate with the 914th and share airplanes. This is the first time in Air Force history that a Guard unit will associate with a Reserve unit. Predictably, the Air Force is facing a number of unprecedented challenges in attempting to shift assets around in order to meet the BRAC mandate. Rep. Slaughter's amendment makes certain that these challenges are addressed by December.

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