

DOLE ON MCCONNELL AFB (3/4/93)

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT I WANT TO MAKE IS THAT MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE WILL NOT SHOW UP ON THE BASE CLOSURE LIST THAT IS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE WHITE HOUSE ON MARCH 15TH. THAT'S WELCOME NEWS AT A TIME WHEN THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IS TALKING ABOUT \$126 BILLION IN DEFENSE BUDGET CUTS.

LET'S FACE IT, COME MARCH 15TH, THERE ARE GOING TO BE A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES IN OTHER STATES THAT WILL WISH THEY HAD MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE. I HAVE BEEN MONITORING THE AIR FORCE'S REORGANIZATION IDEAS SINCE LAST SUMMER. THE AIR FORCE IS LOOKING AT A NUMBER OF WAYS TO REORGANIZE AND CONSOLIDATE, AND WITH THESE HUGE DEFENSE CUTS ON TAP, SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE.

I HAVEN'T SEEN THE AIR FORCE'S FINAL PLAN YET. THE AIR FORCE WILL BE COMING TO BRIEF SENATOR KASSEBAUM AND ME AS SOON AS THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN ARE WORKED OUT.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS IS A POSITIVE SIGN FOR MCCONNELL. SHOULD WE LOSE THE F-16'S FIGHTER WING, THE AIR FORCE IS APPARENTLY READY TO COMMIT MORE B-1 BOMBERS TO THE MCCONNELL MISSION. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE B-1'S WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO THE KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD. THAT'S A VERY GOOD MISSION.

I CAN'T COMMENT ON THE JOB IMPACT UNTIL I SEE THE AIR FORCE PLAN, BUT I AM HOPEFUL THAT WITH MORE B-1'S THE JOBS ISSUE WILL BE A WASH. BUT THIS IS SOMETHING WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT, AND LOOK AT HARD.

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