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SENATORS BOND-MCCASKILL PRAISE NEW PREDATOR MISSION TO WHITEMAN

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Kit Bond and Claire McCaskill today praised the Pentagon’s decision to award Missouri’s Whiteman Air Force Base the MQ-1 Predator mission.

“The troops at Whiteman have always been at the tip of the military’s spear and the addition of the Predator mission makes this Missouri base one of the most important in the war against terrorism,” said Bond, Missouri’s senior Senator and Vice Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. “The Predator is one of our most important and effective weapons in gathering intelligence and carrying out strikes on terrorists.”

“As the home of the B-2 bomber, Whiteman Air Force Base already plays a critical role in defending our nation. The decision is further testament to the capabilities of the world class team at Whiteman. I’m proud that we will be operating these Predator missions out of Missouri and that Whiteman will continue to be at the forefront of the fight against terrorism and our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq,” said McCaskill.

The Secretary of the Air Force, Michael Donley, called the Senators earlier today to let them know Whiteman was selected for the new mission. As a result of being chosen for the Predator mission, 280 military and civilian personnel will begin arriving at Whiteman this September. The mission is expected to be fully operational by February 2011.

The MQ-1 Predator is a cutting-edge weapons system made up of unmanned drones that allows our military to gather intelligence and carry out strikes on High-Value terrorist cells. Pilots will control the military’s MQ-1 Predator aircraft from the new MQ-1 Remote Split Operation squadron and ground control station at Whiteman Air Force Base.

Whiteman Air Force Base, located in Knob Noster Missouri, is a “total force base” with Active-Duty, Reserve and Guard members from the Air Force, Army and Navy all training and fighting together to defend America. The base is already home to the B-2 bomber, and the addition of the critical MQ-1 Predator mission underscores the importance of Whiteman to our nation’s defense.

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