

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

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[Refinery Bill Moves Ahead Despite Protests by Democrats](#)

Oil Daily
30 September, 2005

Gaining rapid support and momentum from two hurricanes, but weathering a storm of criticism from Democrats, a House of Representatives panel approved by voice vote legislation that seeks to increase US refining capacity by rolling back key air pollution rules, expediting permits and designating new refinery sites.

The legislation was cobbled together and passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee in less than a month, prompting accusations from Democrats that it was being rammed through without adequate debate.

Notwithstanding the protests, the panel approved the legislation with Republican support early Thursday after debating past midnight. The refinery legislation is expected to be knitted together with the energy legislation passed by the House Resources Committee Wednesday (OD Sep.29,p2) and moved to the floor next Thursday.

"It is unfortunate that it takes a hurricane to show us just how acute the [refinery] problem is," said Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton (R-Texas). "Our country needs more oil refineries because the people who work for a living need gasoline to get to work."

The Republican leadership is touting the new energy legislation, coming as it does just two months after a massive energy policy bill was enacted into law, as the legislative fix for energy problems exposed by the hurricanes. A number of provisions, considered politically volatile and discarded during debate on the massive energy bill, find a place in the new legislation.

Democrats objected to both the substance of the bill and the process, saying it was being rushed through. "To act on this bill at this time has the potential to embarrass the committee," said Rep. John Dingell (Mich.), the panel's top Democrat. He said he could not "cooperate given an unwise process that can only produce doomed legislation."

Several Democrats were particularly angered by the move to roll back air pollution rules. They emphasized that environmental rules and permitting were not the problem but the reluctance among companies to invest in a sector that typically does not give handsome returns.

The legislation would ease Clean Air Act's New Source Review (NSR) program that requires companies to update pollution control when modification or expansion of their facilities increases emissions. It also extends deadline for states to meet tough federal air quality standards, which essentially thwarts new regulations on refineries.

Industry groups say NSR and other environmental rules add to uncertainty, thus inhibiting expansion of refining capacity, a view the Bush administration shares.

"Unfortunately, this appears to be a cynical attempt to exploit the recent hurricanes for political gain -- and the gain of well-connected special-interest polluters," said Frank O'Donnell, Clean Air Watch president. "This would be the biggest weakening of the Clean Air Act in history."

In another major step, the legislation reduces the number of fuel specifications or boutique fuels to 6 from some 20 -- two types of diesel fuels, a conventional gasoline, two clean fuels and reformulated gasoline. The boutique fuel provision has come under heavy fire from National League of Cities Executive Director Donald Borut, who said, " We believe that provisions in the proposed legislation regarding reformulated gasoline are back-door attempts at invalidating state laws banning the use of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), a known carcinogen."

The move to give the Department of Energy the lead authority on permitting has also sparked criticism. Other key provisions include: designating sites for new refineries, including former military bases; providing regulatory risk insurance; streamlining siting and construction requirements for pipelines; prodding interested parties to build the Alaska natural gas pipeline by allowing federal loan guarantees; and giving the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission the authority to monitor operators of natural gas "gathering" lines.

The legislation also strives to crack down on price gouging by directing the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to promulgate a standard for price gouging within one year of the bill's enactment. Further, FTC is required to draft a report on the price of refined petroleum products on the New York Mercantile Exchange

It also allows the Energy Secretary to draw down and sell petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to increase

additional capacity sufficient to permit filling the reserve to one billion barrels.

Transformation to Streamline Military Health

American Forces Press Service
29 September, 2005
by Samantha Quigley

Service members can rest easy that their health care benefits will only improve with the chartering of the Military Health System Office of Transformation, the director of the new office said Friday.

"It's important service members and [their] families know they are meant to be the focus of this patient-oriented system of the future," RADM John Mateczun, Navy deputy surgeon general, said. "There is no intent to lessen the health care delivery they would see today."

He said patients of the military health care system should notice a more patient-focused manner of delivering service.

The Defense Department announced Aug. 31 that acting Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England had chartered the new office to reform military health services. Eight people will make up the new office: two each from the Army, Navy and Air Force, and two from TRICARE Management Activity.

Mateczun likened changing the system to building a house. What is to be included in the house as well as the materials to be used must be decided upon, he said.

"You still have to have somebody transform that into a plan so the contractors and subcontractors will know exactly what to do," he said. "That's what the Office of Transformation's job is going to be. It's kind of like an architect. It's taking the building blocks that have been put together and then drawing the plan."

From that plan, he said, a team including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the services and TRICARE will be able to build that new

military health system of the future. They will get their raw materials, or building blocks, from the Base Realignment and Closure process, local working group recommendations and medical readiness review initiatives, Mateczun said.

"When all those building blocks come together, you'll have actually four or five different views of how the system needs to transform," he said. "What [this] office will do will be to take all of those and put them together into a blueprint that the team ...[will evaluate to] make sure we build the system we need for the future."

That future, he said, is a military health system that's efficient and can capitalize on the new technologies and drugs that are constantly changing America's health system.

"We want to maintain the very high standard of both battlefield care and the health care systems we have today worldwide," Mateczun said. "But, at the same time, make sure we're doing it as efficiently as we can [by] being good stewards of the money the American people provide."

BRAC panel recommends TRADOC changes

The Leavenworth Lamp
29 September, 2005
by TRADOC News Service

FORT MONROE, Va. - The plan to relocate U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command headquarters and several of TRADOC's schools now faces one last milestone in the base realignment and closure process: Congress.

According to the BRAC process timeline established by law, the president had until Sept. 23 to approve or disapprove the BRAC Commission's recommendations; he chose to approve the commission's report and did so Sept. 15. Congress now has 45 legislative days to accept or reject the report in its entirety - Congress can't make changes to the final report.

The Defense Department recommended in May closing Fort Monroe, Va., where TRADOC is headquartered, and the BRAC commission

affirmed this by its August voting. Headquarters TRADOC will most likely move to Fort Eustis, Va., to stay within commuting distance of Joint Forces Command headquarters in Norfolk, Va., as DoD recommended.

Also planned is U.S. Army Accessions Command and U.S. Army Cadet Command headquarters' moves to Fort Knox, Ky., along with the Army's Human Resources Command, to join U.S. Army Recruiting Command in a nexus that will create "a center of excellence for military personnel and recruiting functions by improving personnel lifecycle management," according to DoD's BRAC report.

The BRAC panel also supported DoD's recommendation to consolidate seven TRADOC branch schools into centers patterned after the Maneuver Support Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., which combines the military police, engineer and chemical centers and schools. The recommended school consolidations include:

- n The Air Defense Artillery Center and School at Fort Bliss, Texas, would combine with the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Okla., to establish a Net Fires Center at Fort Sill, which would consolidate net fires training and doctrine development at one location.

- n The Armor Center and School at Fort Knox, Ky., would move to Fort Benning, Ga., to consolidate with the Infantry Center and School into a Maneuver Center of Excellence for ground-forces training and doctrine development. Consolidation joins both infantry and armor one-station unit training, allowing the Army to reduce the number of basic combat training locations from five to four (Forts Jackson, Sill and Leonard Wood would be the other three besides Fort Benning).

- n DoD plans to create a Combat Service Support Center at Fort Lee, Va., by moving the Ordnance Center and School from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and the Transportation Center and School at Fort Eustis, and merging them with the Combined Arms Support Command, the Quartermaster Center and School and the Army Logistic Management College at Fort Lee. The

Missile and Munitions Center would also move from Redstone Arsenal, Ala., to Fort Lee to be part of the new CSS Center. This would consolidate CSS training and doctrine development at one installation.

Fort Lee would also become the home of two joint centers: one for consolidated transportation-management training and another for joint culinary training.

Transportation management training would move from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Fort Lee to consolidate similar service schools. As home of the most military transportation training, Fort Lee would become the Joint Center for Consolidated Transportation Management training.

The Air Force's culinary training would also leave Lackland AFB, to be relocated at Fort Lee, which would be established as the Joint Center of Excellence for Culinary Training. The Army Center of Excellence-Subsistence is already located at Fort Lee. Fort Lee was chosen because it's the installation with the largest service requirement for culinary training, according to the DoD BRAC report.

Another joint training center to be established would be the Joint Center of Excellence for Religious Training and Education at Fort Jackson, S.C. The home of the Army's Chaplain School would gain other services' religious training and education from Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.; Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.; and Naval Station Newport, R.I.

Other actions that would affect TRADOC include:

- n The BRAC Commission did not support the proposal to move the Aviation Logistics School from Fort Eustis to the Aviation Center and School at Fort Rucker, Ala., so the school will remain at its current location.

- n The BRAC panel supported DoD's recommendation to relocate the drill sergeant schools at Fort Benning and Fort Leonard Wood and consolidated them with the DSS at Fort

Jackson, S.C. This would consolidate drill sergeant training from three locations to one, which fosters consistency, standardization and training proficiency, according to DoD's recommendation.

The BRAC commission approved 86 percent of DoD's original recommendations - 119 with no change and another 45 with amendments. However, the commission rejected 13 recommendations, significantly modified another 13, and made five additional closure or realignment recommendations on its own initiative.

DoD's BRAC recommendations would reduce excess military infrastructure between 5 percent and 11 percent and save \$48.8 billion over 20 years, according to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Editor's note: Adapted from articles by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service, and TRADOC News Service reports.

Local News Articles

Government will sell Navy airbase; Maine officials had hoped for transfer

Portland Press Herald, Maine
30 September, 2005
By Dennis Hoey

BRUNSWICK -- The federal government will sell Brunswick Naval Air Station at fair market value after the base closes, a top defense official said Thursday, crushing speculation that state and local governments would get the land for next to nothing.

"The biggest fallacy out there is people believe this land is going to be transferred to the town for \$ 1," said James Trusiani, a Topsham selectman.

People had reason to expect a simple exchange. Military installations have been turned over to states or towns after previous rounds of base closings.

But that won't be the case this time, Wayne Army, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Facilities, told local officials during a two-hour long presentation Thursday morning.

Army, Kimberly Kesler, Director of the Base Realignment and Closure program's West Coast management office, and David Drozd, who is in charge of the BRAC's Northeast office, met with local officials before conducting a tour of the air station.

In addition to laying out the federal government's plan for selling the air station, Army said he came to Brunswick because he wanted to familiarize himself with the 3,200-acre installation before the base closure list becomes law on Nov. 9.

In May, the Pentagon targeted the Brunswick Naval Air Station for realignment. Under the initial plan, Brunswick would have remained open with a skeleton crew. Most of its personnel and planes would have been transferred to a Navy base in Jacksonville, Fla. Over the summer, the BRAC commissioners voted to close the air station after it became clear that realignment did not make sense.

Since that decision, Gov. John Baldacci has pledged to help the Brunswick region recover from the loss. His staff has said the base would officially close in 2011.

A local redevelopment authority will be formed next month to create a reuse plan for the installation.

Brunswick's Town Manager Donald Gerrish said the Town Council will appoint an authority with Brunswick residents while Topsham will form its own authority to deal with redevelopment of the 80-acre Topsham Annex. The Annex is considered part of the air station property.

The authorities will take several months to create a reuse plan and zoning for the base properties. Meanwhile, BRAC officials will conduct their own assessment of the base's

assets and any lingering environmental problems.

Once those studies are done, the federal government will establish a value for the base.

Army said federal, state and local agencies, as well as private sector businesses will have a shot at getting pieces of the base property -- for fair market value.

"I am not sure that there is a pecking order," he said.

Army said the government did transfer properties at no cost in previous rounds of base closures, but its philosophy changed because it found itself giving land away to towns or states that were not prepared to develop the sites. In several cases, those properties remained vacant for years.

Loring Air Force Base in Limestone was transferred for free to the state of Maine in 1994. And Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth was given to the state of New Hampshire for free in 1988. Both facilities, which have become hubs of economic activity, are currently managed by private authorities.

Preston Hartman, spokesman for U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, said Snowe still plans to introduce legislation that would remove the requirement that the air station be sold at fair market value.

Hartman said the provision would simply give Brunswick or the state the option of having the air station's ownership transferred at no cost.

"People in the community think we are going to get this land for free," Brunswick's Assistant Town Manager Patricia Harrington said. "But he (Army) made it clear that the Navy doesn't want to give it away."

Harrington said she was not surprised or disappointed, saying Brunswick may not want ownership. That issue will be addressed by the redevelopment authority during its deliberations, she said.

Army said his goal is to have a buyer or buyers lined up by the time the base shuts down.

"Why should we wait 10 or 15 years to transfer ownership of the base. Our goal is when the last sailor leaves Brunswick, we'll be able to hand the keys over to the new owner," Army said.

Life After BRAC: Can Region Retain Its Spirit Of Unity?

Experts ask question with eye toward economic development

The Day

30 September, 2005

By Anthony Cronin

Eastern Connecticut pulled together this summer to save the Naval Submarine Base in Groton. Now the question is: Can it continue to pull together to promote economic development that transcends the borders of its many towns and cities?

According to a panel of experts at a forum on regional development at The Day on Thursday, the answer is yes, with some caveats: There are still hurdles ranging from New England-bred hometown parochialism to this state's reputation as a pricey place to do business.

"BRAC (base realignment and closure) is a superb example of what we can do when threatened from outside," Tony Sheridan, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, said, referring to the Pentagon proposal to shut down the 687-acre Groton submarine base. "We all left our politics at the door."

But when confronted with issues that might require a regional solution, from the possibility of regional schools to emergency services or public works, Connecticut's 169 towns and cities can often bog down in parochial concerns, including relinquishing local control. Connecticut's municipalities often compete with each other for business development to buoy finances that are overly dependent on the property tax.

Mark Oefinger, town manager in Groton, said officials in the region should identify a handful of projects that could benefit the entire region. “We tend to come together in crisis mode, and our culture is not to think regionally unless we are in a crisis mode,” he said.

Oefinger said the region already has several regionally focused groups, including the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region, or SeCTer, which have developed a blueprint for regional economic development.

That blueprint, called the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS, offers five major goals for the region, including diversifying its economic base, improving career opportunities and improving its infrastructure, such as its transportation system.

Sheridan said several large parcels in eastern Connecticut, including the former Norwich Hospital site and the former Seaside Regional Center in Waterford, are examples of potential development parcels whose potential has ebbed and flowed over the years. He suggested the region might want to consider a regional development authority that could preside over the development of such parcels.

Thomas Marano, an economic-development expert with Northeast Utilities, said successful economic development rests on four “pillars”: vision, consensus, planning and persistence.

“If we as a region don't have a vision for ourselves, where do we go?” he asked. “It starts with a vision. And without consensus, the vision perishes. And without planning, the consensus perishes and without persistence, the plan vanishes.”

Nicholas Mullane II, North Stonington's first selectman and SeCTer's chairman, said local officials have shown they can work collectively on behalf of the region. “BRAC was truly a bipartisan effort,” he said. “We just got together and we got it done. And eastern Connecticut has

a strong leadership pool. They're not afraid to step up and get involved.”

Several at the forum, which attracted about 50 municipal leaders, economic-development experts and tourism and business officials, said eastern Connecticut has shown a willingness to work toward regional enterprises, such as its regional water authority and the regional industrial park that straddles Norwich and Franklin.

Janet Pearce, who heads the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, said nonprofits in the region are a major employer and said social service needs are regional in nature and are often overlooked as part of economic development.

“Sometimes people don't want to think of the social services side of the equation,” she said. But vital issues, such as affordable housing, already affect many locally.

“We have a significant portion of our work force paying 50 percent of their take-home pay for rent,” she said.

Connecticut also faces the burden of attracting businesses that are wary of the high costs associated with doing business here, ranging from high business-related taxes to high energy costs. The state also needs to continue to diversify its work force and develop more skilled workers to replace aging but highly skilled workers.

John C. Markowicz, who headed local efforts to save the Groton base this summer and also heads SeCTer, said the “first law of economic development is to keep what you've got.” He said the region has done a good job preserving its economic base despite increasing global competition as well as competition from other areas of the country. He said the comprehensive economic development plan developed by his agency and the council of governments already offers the region a detailed plan for future economic development.

Markowicz said that the lessons learned from the federal base closing and consolidation efforts

this year show that eastern Connecticut officials need to continue to push for initiatives that will better protect the submarine base from future efforts to close it.

The base, which employs more than 10,000 military and civilian employees, is one of a handful of large employers in eastern Connecticut, along with Pfizer Inc., the Electric Boat shipyard, the region's two casinos and the Millstone nuclear power complex in Waterford. Markowicz said officials need to work collectively toward the building of two submarines a year at the EB shipyard, develop more "military friendly" policies at the state level and continue to broaden the sub base as a more general naval base with varied operations beyond those that cater to submarines.

Guard leader defends support of Byrd campaign

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
29 September, 2005

The head of the West Virginia National Guard says he did nothing wrong when he stood onstage with Sen. Robert C. Byrd, in uniform, as the veteran senator announced his bid for a record ninth term.

Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett said he is a state employee and his appearance with Byrd on Tuesday at the state Capitol was not a violation of the Hatch Act. The federal law bars partisan political activities by federal employees.

"I can't put that uniform on in a federal status and do that, but as a state employee I can. It's not illegal or unethical for me to do that. It is something I've never done before," Tackett told the Charleston Daily Mail for a story in Thursday's editions.

He said he had discussed campaigning for Byrd, D-W.Va., with Gov. Joe Manchin, a Democrat, prior to the event.

"When people came in and starting putting negative ads on television and trying to degrade him, Sen. Byrd has done too much for the state

of West Virginia to stand idly by and let people do that. He has done so much for me, I'm going to support him as much as I can," Tackett said, referring to TV ads run by the National Republican Senatorial Committee criticizing Byrd.

It is not unusual for retired military officials to get involved in politics but active military officials are "very cautious in terms of campaigning," said Robert Rupp, a political science professor at West Virginia Wesleyan College.

"Legally as a state employee, he is in bounds," Rupp told the newspaper. "But in terms of tradition, it is a new role to see a military uniform present on a campaign operation."

Tackett said he wanted to send a message to guard members that the West Virginia National Guard "has no truer friend" than Byrd.

Byrd spearheaded the successful effort to persuade the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to reject a Pentagon plan to strip the West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing of its C-130 cargo planes.

A photo of Tackett with Byrd appears on a taxpayer-funded postcard that Byrd's office sent to constituents discussing his role in the 130th's removal from the base closure list. Byrd spokesman Tom Gavin said it was a coincidence that residents received the postcards around the time of Byrd's re-election announcement.

"It went to 270,000 residents in 10 counties where the 130th Airlift Wing live and work," Gavin told the newspaper. "The production process began just after (BRAC) voted, and once that is started the timing is out of the senator's hands."

Byrd had originally planned his announcement a week earlier but postponed it because of West Virginia's efforts to help victims of Hurricane Katrina and because of the funeral for U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist.

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito's office received some complaints about the postcard and referred them to the Senate Ethics Committee, said R.C. Hammond, the congresswoman's spokesman.

"I think the timing of his mailing is obvious," said Capito, R-W.Va. "But I guess the taxpayers will have to make their minds up on that."

National GOP officials are courting Capito to challenge Byrd. Capito is expected to announce later this fall whether she will run against Byrd or for a fourth House term.

Gavin said the Ethics Committee had determined that the postcard was "well within the purview of the ethics guidelines of the Senate."

In June, one of the 130th's planes took Byrd and his campaign manager, Ned Rose, to Wheeling, where they attended two events - the dedication of a new federal building and a \$1,000-a-plate-dinner campaign fundraiser for Byrd, the Daily Mail reported.

Rose said the building dedication was an official event, and that the 130th had provided the transportation so that Byrd could attend the event and a base closure briefing in Charleston earlier that day.

Rose said he accompanied Byrd on the flight because the senator had asked him to fill in for Rep. Alan Mollohan, D-W.Va. Mollohan had been scheduled to introduce Byrd at the dedication but was unable to attend.

"I thought it through before we did it. It wasn't something we just did without thinking," he said.

Feedback

Daily Press (Newport News, Virginia)
29 September, 2005

Editor: First, let me say that your comments on the comics keep rolling in. We're glad to get them, but it's causing a Feedback logjam. Stay tuned tomorrow for more on the comics. Today,

however, we're taking a break from that issue to tackle other questions:

* David, Seaford: For weeks after Katrina, the press lambasted the president and the FEMA director for their horrible response to the disaster. Their failures lead to anarchy, mass murders, roving gangs, rapes, death in the thousands and charges of bigotry. While the hurricane was beyond human control, stopping man-made events was. The "truth" is now coming out ("Many New Orleans horror stories turn out false.") Now the press acknowledges that some of what it reported was false. But all the press has to say is, "Oops. Not our fault. It was the telephones." You owe us more.

* Bob, Newport News: Doesn't the inaccurate, sensationalistic reporting by the media in New Orleans rate higher than Suffolk's novelty license plates, Page 1 above the fold? The media are worse than the profession that buries its mistakes; you hide them, and what you can't hide, you blame on someone else.

Editor: We don't think putting a story on the front page is hiding. The media -- newspapers and television -- quoted witnesses saying they had seen atrocities. It now appears that many of those tales were rumors. We don't mean to pass the buck, but in the chaos surrounding this natural disaster, hard facts were hard to come by. Newspaper services printed the comments from officials and attributed the tales to the people who told them. Now that they appear to be not entirely true, we're doing our best to sort through and report what did and didn't happen.

* Mark, Williamsburg: Calling in reference to Wednesday's Feedback: William and Mary is, indeed, a Division I school.

Editor: Quite right. Sorry. The Division I-A distinction is what we meant to stress. Virginia Tech and U.Va. are both in that top division. William and Mary and Hampton University are Division I-AA. CNU is Division III.

* Janice, Poquoson: In the article in the paper about the governor appointing 12 local people to the BRAC panel, I think you should have

indicated who all of these panel members are. It would be very interesting to see, aside from Northrop Grumman and the mayors of the two cities, who else is on this panel, just so the residents in this area can have a sense of confidence in the decision-making process.

Editor: Good idea. Here's the full lineup of the Peninsula Area BRAC Working Group:

- * Michael Petters, Newport News; president of Northrop Grumman, Newport News.
- * I. Vincent Behm Jr., Hampton; former member of the House of Delegates and president of Goodman Hardware and Glass Co.
- * Jim Burgett, chairman of the York County Board of Supervisors.
- * Jack L. Ezzell Jr., Hampton; rector of Norfolk State University and president of Zelltech Inc.
- * Mayor Joe S. Frank, Newport News.
- * Del. Phillip A. Hamilton, Newport News.
- * Clyde R. Hoey II, Newport News; president of the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce.
- * Mayor Ross A. Kearney II, Hampton.
- * State Sen. Mamie E. Locke, Hampton.
- * McKinley Price, Newport News; chairman of the Thomas Nelson Community College Board.
- * Walter S. Segaloff, Smithfield; president of the Warwick Group Ltd.
- * Alan S. Witt, Newport News; chief executive officer of Witt Mares PLC.
- * Cal: Saturday, Sept. 24, Daily Press -- front page, Page A1: Army evacuates a person. That happens to be an Air Force airplane, not an Army airplane.

Editor: I'll trust you on that. But the Army was handling the evacuation, which is what our photo caption said.

* Edward, Hampton: Your article on Patsy Cline's childhood home: As it says, she was there from age 16 on, but she was actually born west of Winchester, about 15 miles or so, in a little town called Gore.

* Freda: Did anybody at DP even LOOK at the article in Sunday's Money & Work about Virginia Beach? A strange combination of headline and photo: Read "Virginia Beach goes highbrow," and then look at the picture. If this is your idea of "highbrow," please, for the sake of the children, don't ever print a picture that you consider "lowbrow." Also, today, a headline stated, "Facilities in Rita's path bore the most damage." Now, you know, that is almost a GIVEN in my book. If there is one thing that I have learned in my 90-year life span it is that if you are in the path of a hurricane, you will receive more damage than if you are not.

Editor: Points taken. On the Virginia Beach story, we used a photo on the section front that originally went with another story. It showed. The photo we used with the continuation of the story made the point much better. On the headline, we were trying to refer to the fact that the hurricane veered away from many oil refineries near Houston. But you're right; it veered away from the point.

* I'm just calling about the article on the first page of the Daily Press, "NASA worker's son killed in Iraq." I read the article, but I am confused to the fact of where it says he was working in the family business when he was killed near Iraq. It never goes on to say what the family business is. I realize his family was in the military also, but do you consider his family being in the military a family business?

Editor: Yes, we were stressing the family's tradition of military service.

* A2 Monday: Great article about "Fox anchor's ship comes in." Is Fox going to have that program on Channel 43? It would be nice if you included that. Don't see anything specific. Can you clarify that?

Editor: I would if I could. But as the story said, "there's talk about" a national nightly news show on Fox affiliates. Nothing specific yet.

* Sorry, but now I'm more confused than ever. The courthouse is at 2500 Washington Ave. The post office is on 25th Street. What courthouse/post office building in Newport News are you talking about?

Editor: The Newport News courthouse is for city and state trials. Federal trials were held in federal courtrooms above the post office. *

Today's Feedback responses were written by Robin McCormick, deputy editor.

Thune still pushing BRAC delay

The Hill

29 September, 2005

By Roxana Tiron

The junior senator from South Dakota is not one to give up, but John Thune (R) may be running out of options on high-profile legislation he is pushing.

Thune, who emerged victorious in a bitter fight to save Ellsworth Air Force Base from the Pentagon's chopping block, still wants the 2005 base realignment and closure (BRAC) round to be delayed.

But Thune probably will not be able to offer the amendment he introduced earlier this summer for the defense authorization bill.

The authorization measure has not received floor time in the Senate, after Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) pulled it from the floor before the August recess. The reason: It contained provisions that the Bush administration threatened to veto - Thune's delay of BRAC until certain Pentagon strategic reviews are completed and troops return from combat and two amendments introduced by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) that deal with the treatment of military detainees.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner (R-Va.) has been working with leadership for the past month to bring the bill back onto the floor. Now he is negotiating the number of amendments that could be attached to it.

Warner and Frist have negotiated down to 12 amendments that will make it to the floor, according to a GOP aide. Thune submitted his amendment to be considered among them, but it is not likely to be part of the package.

At least one of the contentious amendments introduced by McCain is likely to make it onto the list. McCain's amendment to standardize the interrogation procedures of military detainees, stipulating that interrogators could only use techniques listed in the Army's Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation, has Warner's support.

McCain also proposed another change that would expressly prohibit cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of those in U.S. custody. Both Warner and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee on the Armed Services Committee, support that amendment.

A spokesperson for McCain said that the senator submitted the two amendments that deal with the treatment of detainees but has not received an answer yet on whether leadership will clear either of those. Meanwhile, a spokesman for Warner, declined to describe the nature of the negotiations.

Even though time is running out, Thune said he is not throwing in the towel.

"I support what the amendment strives to accomplish whether or not it is included in the floor debate. The logic behind it is still correct," Thune told The Hill.

"I am keeping all my options open," Thune added. And that means the possibility of attaching the amendment to the pending defense appropriations bill.

McCain has already threatened to attach his amendments on detainee treatment to the appropriations bill if authorization does not make it to the floor.

Senate appropriators have delayed considering the defense bill until authorization cleared the floor in part because of amendments that would migrate onto the appropriations bill, thus lengthening the floor action.

With the fiscal year coming to an end tomorrow and the fear that the Pentagon is running out of money for its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Senate appropriators now are charging through the defense bill.

The Defense Appropriations Subcommittee marked up the bill Monday, and the full committee considered it yesterday.

Frist said yesterday that the defense appropriations bill is going to the floor as early as today, after the Senate finishes voting on the nomination of John Roberts as the next chief justice of the United States.

But with Frist moving slowly on the decision to bring the defense authorization bill back up, authorizers have been considering the idea of attaching the bill as an amendment to the defense-spending bill. This is an idea that Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, was considering last week.

According to the GOP aide, the authorization bill is going to be considered after the appropriations bill, but no timeline has been set.

The co-sponsors of Thune's bill have not backed off the amendment either, the aide said, adding, "Nobody has pulled off the bill, at least not in principle."

Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), chairman of the defense appropriations subcommittee, signed on to Thune's bill, even though he recognized "that the possibility of delaying BRAC was most likely not going to happen," a spokesperson for the senator said.

Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) who won against the Pentagon's decision to shutter the New London Submarine Base, as well as Maine Republican Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, are among the sponsor of the bill. Maine had mixed results in this round of BRAC, with Portsmouth Naval Shipyard staying open but the New Brunswick Naval Air Station closing.

Bush approved the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendations Sept. 8 and has sent the list to Congress, starting a 45-day period for Congress to approve the list or pass a joint resolution to disapproving it.

Secretary of the Army tours Fort Lee

Petersburg Progress (VA)

30 September, 2005

FORT LEE - In a historic visit, Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey toured Fort Lee Wednesday, examining the Army logistics and training facilities on post.

His visit was during the middle of the Soldier of the Year and Non-commissioned Officer of the Year competitions at Fort Lee.

"These are such wonderful competitions that demonstrate our outstanding soldiers' capabilities," said Harvey, who watched soldiers participating in a daytime competition involving land navigation. "I'm always awed by our soldiers and it's nice to have a competition which recognizes the best among our soldiers and non-commissioned officers."

He said one thing which most struck him was the intense look on the faces of the soldiers during the competition.

Harvey, who was sworn in as secretary of the Army on Nov. 19, 2004, has visited 57 installations in his nine months of his appointment.

"I really want to come back here someday," Harvey said. "You're really the big winners when it comes to [Base Realignment And Closure]. The recommendations approved by the Secretary of Defense will show a significant increase in soldiers here."

Harvey said that this will also benefit the localities around Fort Lee, including Hopewell and Petersburg. He added that these surrounding localities, as well as Prince George, need to work on improving the quality and capacity of their school systems.

Harvey also described the Residential Community Initiative which will benefit both the military and the private sector. Paul Sweeny of the Fort Lee Public Affairs Office said that this can improve the quality of life for soldiers. "It's a very crisp idea where we enter into a limited partnership with private business to provide high quality housing for soldiers in the long term," said Harvey. He said that Fort Lee is on the list to benefit from RCI.

Wednesday night he explained some of the benefits of the RCI program to the local business community at the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce annual dinner.

"It could mean subcontracting 65 percent of the labor to local businesses," said Harvey.

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North Alabama projects in defense bill

The Decatur Daily (AL)
30 September 2005

WASHINGTON — Funding for North Alabama projects is included in the 2006 Department of Defense appropriations bill that has passed committee and is headed for the senate floor, said U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa.

The bill provides \$490.2 billion for new defense-related needs, Shelby said.

"The \$7.9 billion included in this bill for the Missile Defense Agency is essential in light of the missions that Redstone Arsenal gained from the Base Realignment and Closure process," he said.

He also said \$784.347 million will be spent on the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle, built at Boeing's Decatur facility. The EELV is the Air Force's space lift program.

Shelby also announced \$63 million for the Light Utility Helicopter, a program managed at Redstone, and \$12 million for Close-in Active Protection System Integration radar research at Redstone. — Seth Burkett

Belvoir, local schools address challenges for students

The Belvoir Eagle (VA)
29 September, 2005
By Julia LeDoux

When entering a new school for the first time, military youth are concerned about a number of things, according to Fort Belvoir Elementary School Liaison Officer Marie Balocki. Among their concerns are fitting in, finding their way around their new school, adjusting to a new schedule and grading system, repeating courses and determining the number of credits that will be accepted towards graduation requirements.

"Their number one concern is having and finding someone to eat lunch with," said Balocki.

The Army and three local school systems have now teamed up to make starting over in a new school easier for military kids.

Representatives from Fort Belvoir and public school systems in Fairfax, Prince William, and Stafford counties signed a memorandum of agreement Monday that is designed to address the transition challenges that primarily affect high school students with military ties.

"It's something we should be doing," said Wayne Mallard, deputy superintendent of Prince William County Schools. "It's the right thing for children."

The signers of the document agreed to improve the timely transfer of student records and to develop programs to make the first two weeks of enrollment easier on students.

The MOA also calls for the promotion of practices which foster access to extracurricular programs and for the establishment of

procedures which lessen the adverse impact of moves made at the end of the junior year as well as before and during the senior year.

Installation commander Col. Brian Lauritzen said conditions being triggered by Base Realignment and Closure recommendations and the Global War on Terror, have helped to create the perfect conditions to spur the changes. Fort Belvoir stands to gain an additional 20,000 personnel as the result of BRAC.

"I'm not going to play games," Lauritzen told the educators. "If I can tell you something, I will."

Initiatives for easing student transitions undertaken at Fort Belvoir include educating parents on their responsibilities for supporting both schools and students, said Balocki. The installation has also begun a student partnership program and participates in the Partners in Education program and home school program.

In addition, the Army has already completed several initiatives to ease student transition, Lauritzen said. Among them are the stabilization of Soldiers for their student's senior year of high school, an emphasis on parent-teacher conferences, longer tours of duty and a policy for active duty personnel to in an out process at schools.

Drone education Defense bill includes funding for UAV center at UND

Grand Forks Herald
Herald Staff Report
29 September, 2005

Air Force officials said during the Base Realignment and Closure process there was an advantage in locating a drone aircraft mission at Grand Forks Air Force Base. UND is a step closer to taking advantage of that belief.

The federal defense appropriations bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee includes \$1 million to create a UND Center for Excellence that supports Grand Forks Air Force

Base's upcoming unmanned aerial vehicle mission, Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., said Wednesday.

The bill goes next to the full Senate for consideration.

Dorgan, who said he secured the money in the bill, said UND will work with the Air Force to establish the "Center for Excellence for Defense UAV Education."

With its Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, the university is "uniquely positioned" to help the Defense Department and Air Force with training, professional development and research in UAV-related fields, Dorgan said in a news release.

"All the key elements for the Center of Excellence for Defense UAV Education exist here at UND," the dean of the School of Aerospace Sciences, Bruce Smith, said in the same release. "That includes our proximity to the border, our connections to a research-intensive university, our Air Force base and the flight school at the School of Aerospace Sciences."

A grant from the Federal Aviation Administration also will support the program, according to Dorgan's office.

In addition, the Senate bill includes \$2 million for UND to continue helicopter training for West Point cadets and ROTC students.

Group Takes Dim View of Lindbergh Plan

San Diego Business Journal
29 September, 2005

The idea of adding a second, parallel runway at Lindbergh Field to accommodate a projected increase in the county's demand for air travel and cargo hauling should be taken off the table as far as an airport planning committee is concerned.

The San Diego Regional Airport Authority's four-member planning committee on Sept. 26 voted unanimously against a notion that a second, parallel runway at Lindbergh could be built if part of Point Loma's Midway District was annexed and razed.

The committee's decision was based on findings that 18,800 residents of the area would have to be relocated – almost four times the 5,000 limit that shot down other sites taken off the list of possibilities earlier in the process of identifying sites suitable for relocating the airport.

The full nine-member board is expected to adopt the committee's recommendation at an Oct. 3 meeting.

Without using any land at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, a second, parallel runway option would have torn out the ipayOne Center, formerly the San Diego Sports Arena; the Midway Drive post office; and the Liberty Station redevelopment project on property that once was the Naval Training Center. Property on Rosecrans Street northeast of Nimitz Boulevard would also have been affected.

However, keeping the regional airport at Lindbergh Field is still a possibility, particularly since additional gates may be added to help meet increased demand.

Another solution, yet to given additional consideration, is the idea of laying out runways in a V-shaped configuration. But that option would not allow for jets to perform simultaneous takeoffs and landings – considered a must-have for an airport of the future.

Included among the list of possible relocation sites are five active military installations, including: Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, Camp Pendleton and North Island Naval Air Station. None made the Base Realignment and Closure – BRAC – list and they are not currently being studied. A site in the Imperial County desert also remains on the short list of possibilities.

Grassley says he'll oppose resolution on base closings

The Des Moines Register
29 September, 2005
By JANE NORMAN

Washington, D.C. — Republican Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa said Wednesday that he would oppose a base-closing resolution, citing "mischief" in the process that cost the Quad Cities more than 1,000 jobs.

Grassley has been extremely unhappy with a decision by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to move one of the largest units from the Rock Island Arsenal to Detroit. Civic leaders in the Quad Cities and other lawmakers also have protested.

"I have very good evidence not that the process is broken, but within the process there was just mischief," said Grassley, who has never before opposed a base-closing bill. He said he didn't know whether the "mischief" was intentional.

The House and Senate are expected to vote soon on whether to accept the recommendations made by the independent commission, the final step in the base-closing process. Lawmakers cannot change any recommendations.

The commission voted to move the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, or TACOM, from the arsenal to Detroit. But Grassley said commission staff members gave "misleading" information to commissioners when questions arose about the cost of the move.

Staff members told commissioners there would be \$1.8 billion in savings over 20 years. However, Grassley said, that figure refers to an entire consolidation in which TACOM was included, rather than the specific Quad Cities-to-Detroit move.

That move will instead "squander" \$128 million of taxpayers' money over 20 years, Grassley said in a statement planned to be made on the Senate floor. He said that the commission staff and commissioners had "failed in their

responsibilities" and that he had lost confidence in their work product.

The facilities into which TACOM would move in Detroit already are strained to capacity, and the base is surrounded by development and has no room to grow, Grassley said. Moving in would require major military construction, including two parking garages, and workers' pay would have to be higher than it is in the Quad Cities.

The Rock Island Arsenal is located on an island in the Mississippi River between Davenport and Rock Island, Ill.

BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi said in a letter of reply to Grassley that no one on the commission asked specifically what the arsenal jobs move would cost, so the answer was not given. In addition, the \$128 million cost does not have a significant impact on overall savings from the move, he said.

Ron Summers, a spokesman for the Quad City Development Group, which had fought to save the jobs, said Grassley's vote against the base-closing bill "speaks volumes about the process" because of Grassley's integrity.

"We think the arguments he makes are very valid, and they are the same concerns we tried to raise," said Summers.

However, he acknowledged that unless Congress turns down the report — a possibility that appears dim — "it's just going to happen."

Also Wednesday, aides to Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa said he, too, would vote against the base-closing report. Spokeswoman Maureen Knightly said Harkin has been supportive of the process but "has to disagree, just based on the standard of military value."

Opinions/ Editorials

Additional Notes