

**Regional Base Realignment and Closure Commission Hearing  
Testimony of Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.**

**Overview of Defense Departments Recommendation Regarding Fort  
Monmouth Army Garrison Eatontown, NJ**

**Friday, July 8, 2005**

**Opening:**

Good morning commissioners and thank you for holding this hearing. I would like to thank the elected officials as well as the concerned New Jersey citizens who traveled here today. We are all opposed to the Pentagon's recommendation to close Fort Monmouth. Our reasons are primarily based on the military value of Fort Monmouth to the war effort and the negative impact on the war that would result from moving Fort Monmouth.

**BRAC History:**

I have been a member of Congress for 17 years and during every round of BRAC the Department of Defense always fails to understand the significance of R&D facilities. This is not just moving troops from one base to another; we are talking about a highly advanced degreed civilian work force. These people have worked to create a synergy in their field that is second to none. Most will simply not move. The cost of reconstructing lab facilities and reconstituting a high tech workforce will be tremendous.

I believe that the Pentagon violated the BRAC criteria in recommending that Fort Monmouth be closed. They ignored the "brain drain" that would make it impossible to perform the Fort's functions. They paid no attention to jointness, which cannot be accomplished by moving the Fort's Land C4ISR capability to another base - Aberdeen Proving Ground, while similar communications and electronics functions for the Navy and Air Force remain at other locations. They severely underestimated cost, and the inability of accomplishing their goal in a six-year

period. Their testing rationale is completely flawed because it ignores the specialized testing that cannot be performed at Aberdeen.

**Brain Drain:**

I believe the Pentagon's assumption that a substantial number of Fort Monmouth's work force will move to a new location is wrong. A serious loss of intellectual capital will constitute a "brain drain" that will negatively affect the United States armed forces. Secretary of Army, Dr. Francis Harvey, voiced his concern at a BRAC hearing on May 18th, in which he stated, "there is a concern and a risk", in moving Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen, Maryland.

It seems to me that the risk is simply too great for the Department of Defense to take. At a time when terrorists in Iraq are adapting their improvised explosive device (IED) technology to get around US "jammer" systems, we cannot afford an interruption in the services the Fort provides today's war fighters. According to a Harris poll, Fort Monmouth would lose a significant majority of the current workforce, and would therefore be unable to complete its missions, leading to a substantial deviation from the military value criteria.

**Centers of Excellence:**

One of the Department of Defense's goals during this BRAC round is to create centers of excellence. The Army already has a Land C4ISR center at Fort Monmouth. The Pentagon's recommendation would destroy an already effective center of excellence.

The Department of Defense never considered jointness; moreover it did not consider the joint access Fort Monmouth already has at nearby Fort Dix/Lakehurst/McGuire "megabase", which combines Army, Navy and Air Force bases in one location. The Pentagon is simply moving one

army base - Fort Monmouth to another army base - Aberdeen Proving Ground. Therefore this closure is unnecessary and inappropriate.

No synergy will result by moving the Fort Monmouth mission to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, because Aberdeen does no research and development or testing that is related to the C4ISR mission.

**Cost Analysis/Time Frame:**

The Defense Department cost analysis numbers are wrong because the DoD is expecting a majority of the current workforce will move to Aberdeen Proving Ground. The Defense Department does not assume the recruitment of lost civilian employees, and training of the new employees. That will add a significant amount to the cost. One should also add in costs in lost time while a new employee is being trained to a level of average productivity, which takes about three years to complete. These costs are not included in the report. Costs in terms of time or security clearances were also not included in the report.

The Defense Department has also underestimated the cost to reconstruct the laboratory facilities. I visited Aberdeen Proving Ground on Friday, July 1st, and I asked, point blank, "Do you have any available lab facilities to house Fort Monmouth type missions". And the response I got was, "No". Since there is no lab space available, Aberdeen will have to refurbish existing facilities or completely build from scratch, either way this is not going to be an inexpensive process.

Let me give you an example of how difficult it will be to reconstitute the facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground. When we last toured Fort Monmouth we were at the Satellite Command Center (SATCOM) and the program manager explained to us that her facility could not be rebuilt, it is not replaceable. Therefore, it will have to be moved piece by piece to Aberdeen. That could

take years and cost millions, not to mention the risk you take in damaging essential functions.

None of that cost was included in the Pentagon's estimate.

According to BRAC criteria the closure and move would have to be completed within six years from start to finish. No facilities are currently at Aberdeen Proving Ground to receive Fort Monmouth functions. Highly specialized labs and, R&D facilities would have to be constructed and in some cases literally moved from one base to the other. Combine this with the "brain drain", and the inability to recruit and train new employees, and there is no possibility of accomplishing this move within the BRAC timeline

**Testing:**

The Defense Department's only stated rationale for its recommendation was that Fort Monmouth could not provide sufficient testing of the technology it develops. This is simply inaccurate.

Fort Monmouth currently does most of the testing on base. Additional specialized testing of the equipment developed at Fort Monmouth is done at other locations, much of which is unsuitable for Aberdeen Proving Ground. For example, when I visited Aberdeen Proving Ground last Friday, officials there admitted that they do not have enough space or the desert like environment to handle the kind of specialized testing for Fort Monmouth equipment currently conducted at Fort Huachuca and Yuma Proving Ground. There is no indication that any incremental testing can be done at Aberdeen Proving Ground that is not currently being done at Fort Monmouth.

**Closing:**

In the end, it all comes back to what the Secretary of the Army, Dr. Francis Harvey said on May 18 2005, "**There is a concern and a risk**" in moving Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen, Maryland.

Our mission is to protect the soldier in the field, and we are obligated to ensure that our soldiers have the best equipment to protect them. Just think of a scenario three years from now, there is a

commander in the field, he calls Fort Monmouth to quickly develop a new technology for immediate use in the field and the DoD tells that commander, "We can't right now, we're still reconstituting the Land C4ISR work force." This is a risk we should not be willing to take.

Thank you. If you have any questions, I am more than happy to answer.

**Introduction of Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney:**

With that said, I present Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II, USN (Ret.).