

**GAO – July 2005 Report on BRAC - Military Bases - Navy**

The Navy eliminated scenarios for strategic reasons, to maintain operational flexibility, and for cost considerations. For example, various scenarios proposing to close Submarine Base San Diego, California, were dropped because a closure would have eliminated the sole capability for berthing attack submarines on the West Coast. Likewise, scenarios proposing to close Naval Station Everett, Washington, were dropped because of the strategic importance of this seaport. Various proposals to close active naval air stations were dropped because of operational concerns. For example, the Navy analyzed the potential to close Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina, and relocate its squadrons to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina. However, the Navy leadership concluded that Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort should be retained for future tactical aviation basing flexibility, especially in light of concerns about the continued viability of basing aviation units at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia. Due to increasing environmental and encroachment issues surrounding Naval Air Station Oceana, the Navy also analyzed various scenarios to close it. However, the analyses indicated a long payback period for achieving return on investment, high one-time costs, and operational issues at receiving sites. Therefore, the Navy determined that the closure of Naval Air Station Oceana was not feasible. Another complicating factor for basing of East Coast tactical aircraft is the Navy's attempt to purchase approximately 33,000 acres in eastern North Carolina to build a new outlying landing field to provide simulated aircraft carrier landings for aircraft stationed at Naval Air Station Oceana and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. The purchase is currently being challenged in federal court over environmental concerns.