

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman

**DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND
REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**



AUGUST 4, 2005

**REGIONAL HEARING
OCEANA NAVAL AIR STATION, VIRGINIA**

DRAFT Internal Working Document – Not for distribution under FOIA**Regional Hearing – NAS Oceana, VA****Questions****For the State and Local witnesses:**

Does the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) ensure that a process can be initiated by the Navy and local governments to stop the encroachment by developers in the Accident Potential Zones (APZs) and designated high Day-Night Average Noise Level (DNL) areas depicted on the Navy's 1999 Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) pamphlet?

How do the state and local governments plan to stop the encroachment by developers and landowners who use "by right" or "prior use" arguments to thwart the Navy and city planners from preventing residential and other incompatible land use in the APZs and high DNL areas?

Please outline the specific measures that the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, VA plan to take to limit or reverse the encroachment of NAS Oceana and Fentress Field.

What does the city or state government plan to do about the new homes presently approved for construction now in the Oceana area APZs?

Please outline the specific measures that the State of Virginia plans to take to limit or reverse the encroachment at NAS Oceana and Fentress Field.

Is the Governor's Office prepared to work with the General Assembly to put state pass-through funding to the cities that would tie Virginia Beach and Chesapeake to long term compliance and implementation of the JLUS provisions and recommendations?

For DoD Officials:

Why is it operationally and economically important to the Navy to have all the Strike Fighter assets located in the same place?

Since the Navy decided to stand up two F-18 Super Hornet Squadrons at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC to alleviate noise issues at Oceana, would you consider relocating additional squadrons at Cherry Point to reduce the noise levels even more? What are the operational and economic advantages or disadvantages to such a decision?

What is the status of the present litigation regarding the Navy's plan to construct a new outlying field in Washington County, North Carolina?

What are the risks associated with the Washington County plaintiffs' success in winning a permanent injunction that would stop the Navy from building the new OLF? Would additional squadrons of F-18 Super Hornets need to be relocated to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point to alleviate the noise issues at Oceana?

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If the Washington County, NC outlying field becomes a reality in the future, could that site become a potential new Navy Master Jet Base if Oceana and the City of Virginia Beach are unable to stop the encroachment?

Are there any other lawsuits pending or filed against the Navy regarding operations at NAS Oceana or Fentress Field?

We understand that because of noise abatement and safety reasons, new aviators must comply with local course rules at NAS Oceana and Fentress Field, flying different altitudes and landing patterns than they would when flying around the aircraft carrier. Does that introduce a negative aspect to their initial skills training? How do the instructors compensate for the differences in land based training and the actual carrier landings?

Have there been any Naval Aviation mishaps attributed to negative training introduced by Field Carrier Landing Practice at Fentress Field in recent years?

It appears that Cecil Field does not suffer from as much land encroachment around their main air field and outlying field boundaries. When the Navy developed the F-18 Super Hornet Final Environmental Impact Statement, was Cecil Field considered as a potential home basing site for the east coast Super Hornets?

Understanding that the Department of Defense made a decision in the 1993 BRAC round to close NAS Cecil Field, what is your opinion of the potential operational benefits of reopening Cecil Field?

What are the operational disadvantages of establishing Cecil Field as the east coast Master Jet Base?

What are the economic considerations regarding relocating the Master Jet Base from Oceana to Cecil?

The land around Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas has thousands of acres of un-encroached areas. What are the operational and economic considerations regarding moving the Master Jet Base from Oceana to Kingsville, Texas? Is it feasible from an operational and economic standpoint to move the F/A-18 Fleet Replacement Squadron to NAS Kingsville to relieve the noise and encroachment issues surrounding NAS Oceana?

**SENATOR GEORGE ALLEN'S TESTIMONY BEFORE
THE BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE (BRAC) COMMISSION
AUGUST 4, 2005**

Chairman Principi and Members of the Commission:

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to once again testify before this Commission. The last time I appeared before you on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia we were discussing the Secretary's recommendations for base closures and realignments for a number of Virginia installations. However, today, we are discussing, Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, a base that this Commission added to the list for consideration for closure and realignment.

I understand the need to thoroughly examine each military facility and evaluate its proper place, if any, in the future of our national military strategy. However, after the testimony some of you heard on site at Oceana - that Oceana has a high military value; that it serves the Navy very well; that the challenges regarding sustainment of operations are manageable; that moving the Navy jets would be harmful to our military and costly to our taxpayers; and that Oceana is the best option on the East Coast for the Navy's Master Jet Base - I trust you will conclude, as the Navy and the Secretary of Defense has, that Oceana remains the best location on the East Coast for the Navy's Master Jet Base and that the common encroachment issue has not negatively impacted the base, its pilots, or its mission.

For those of you who were unable to attend the site visit I would like to re-cap for you the factual findings of the meeting and the testimony your colleagues and I heard directly from those who operate Oceana and those who train there. I found the testimony of everyone from Admiral Turcotte, Commander of the Navy for the Mid-Atlantic Region to the jet fighter pilots to be candid, credible and informative.

NAS Oceana has a tradition of excellence that, for the past 65 years has provided exceptional support to Fleet Carrier Air Wings and Carrier Strike Groups; our joint forces; and our homeland defense and interagency operations. Currently Oceana serves as the East Coast's Master Jet Base and all training for the Atlantic Fleet's air arm goes through Oceana. Oceana's 12,000 military and civilian employees help to serve the more than 250 aircrafts that are a part of 16 fleet squadrons. In fact, Oceana is Virginia Beach's largest employer, which provides a \$1.5 billion annual economic impact to the region.

As we heard at the Oceana site visit on August 1, 2005, from Admiral Turcotte, pilots go through hours and hours of training either in the many F-18s or in the best training equipment in the world, which consists of flight simulators and other state of the art equipment. In fact, pilots spend almost as much time in flight simulators as they do in the air. On flight simulators, pilots fight air battles, fly bombing runs over enemy territory, and practice landing on carriers during the night. The continual repetition of these activities has led to a more lethal Navy as well as a safer Navy, with fewer accidents. Last year, the Navy had the sixth best year when it came to the least amount of accidents. Currently, the Navy is on course to have the fifth safest year in their history. There is an attention to detail that is unmatched and until these pilots meet their requirements, they cannot go into mission.

One of the many positive attributes that Oceana has is its access to unfettered airspace. The Tactical Air Combat Training System (TACTS) Range, which is 30 miles southeast of Oceana, is 4,560 square miles of open airspace which is under the complete control of the military. The TACTS Range provides a unique opportunity for pilots to train against each other. In addition, Admiral Gehman touched upon the fact that the TACTS Range is also utilized by Langley Air Force Base and the importance of this is that the pilots from Oceana can train against dissimilar planes out of Langley. Therefore, pilots do not become too accustomed to training against the same planes day in and day out. I couldn't agree more with Admiral Gehman when he stated that this is precious territory. And, I might add, that should the Commission realign or close Oceana, it would be very difficult and expensive to duplicate this airspace anywhere else.

Mr. Chairman, this is only one of the many reasons why Oceana has a high military value score. In fact, Oceana's military value is so high that according to the Navy, Oceana ranks 5th out of 60 for Non-DON Aviation Bases. That ranking includes a downgrade for encroachment as well. While the BRAC analysis of Oceana puts it 6th out of 34, the bottom line is that no matter who does the scoring, Oceana has a very high military value score and should not be thrown to the curb.

Another reason why Oceana has such a high military value is its co-location with the Norfolk fleet. The closeness in proximity to the fleet provides a unique synergy that enhances military readiness and gives Oceana a significant advantage above other master jet bases. When the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Robert Willard testified before you on July 18, 2005, he asserted – that the co-location to the Norfolk fleet provides a significant advantage.

Now I know that some individuals are concerned that the encroachment issue at Oceana hinders the training and readiness of the pilots. They argue that since the pilots have to come in at a higher altitude than what they would normally come in at to a carrier, because of the noise restrictions, that this somehow causes a major disruption to training. But as we heard at the site visit, these turns, differences in altitude, and altered routes are no different than what the pilots were facing back in 1979 and therefore do not impede mission. Again, Admiral Willard clearly articulated this point before the Commission when he stated, "I would like to assert that from the Navy's vantage point, we believe that Oceana continues to serve the fleet well, that challenges you mentioned regarding encroachment in Oceana have been and are manageable." Admiral Willard does not just hold this opinion, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Gordon England, has also stated that the encroachment at Oceana is manageable. I would also like to note that the Navy said when the new OLF is completed; it will provide a more accurate scenario for pilots flying into a carrier, therefore only enhancing mission effectiveness and safety.

Unfortunately, for some residents, noise is still a problem. However, I do know that for the overwhelming majority of the residents of Virginia Beach every time a jet flies over the remark is, "that's the sound of freedom!" I have heard from thousands of constituents who support keeping Oceana open. I have also received petitions from these men and women and I would like to submit them for the record. These men and women truly appreciate the importance of Oceana and they recognize that every time a jet flies over, freedom and liberty are being advanced.

Mr. Chairman, as I have pointed out, a significant realignment of Oceana will have detrimental effects on our military, but it will also have an effect on our taxpayers. As a United States Senator, I take great pride in being a good steward of the taxpayer dollar – the people of Virginia have entrusted me with this responsibility to use the money as wisely and as effectively as possible. It is no secret that the Navy is contemplating a new master jet base. I would hardly call an investment right now into a new jet base a good use of taxpayers' dollars when Oceana has shown to be 95 percent just as effective as any new base. Moreover, why would we want to "temporarily" move the jets from Oceana to another base – invest hundreds of millions of dollars into these bases so that they can house the jets and then turnaround and spend, which is likely to be over a billion and half dollars to build a new master jet base? This is, in my opinion, not a good use of taxpayer money. The bottom line is that the Navy concluded that even with a \$500 million investment in another existing base, NAS Oceana continues to be the best option for a master jet base on the East Coast.

But what I also found intriguing is that the Navy ran scenarios for every aviation base, taking into account all branches of the military, on the East Coast, and none of them, not one, met the needs of a master jet base or could provide the positive attributes that Oceana presently provides. So if there is no possible location, currently, for a new master jet base, why try and realign the best one on the East Coast? Again, that doesn't make sense militarily and nor for scarce taxpayer dollars.

Furthermore, Admiral Willard testified that dividing a wing from a master jet base could impact mission. He states:

And in dividing a wing from a master jet base, which after all has its own synergy involved, the various type/model/series of aircraft that are together at a master jet base are part of a carrier air wing; they themselves across the communities of those aircraft have to train and be able to fight together much as our joint services do. So dividing up those type/model/series to disparate locations takes away from that synergy that is inherent in the air wing itself, notwithstanding the lack of savings that's associated with that by dividing and now establishing two locations where training operations, maintenance and all of the associated overhead would have to take place.

So from the standpoint of dividing the type/model/series apart at a master jet base like Oceana, from the vantage of a naval aviator or naval leadership, [this proposal is] not desirable either from [a naval aviator or naval leadership] operational standpoint or from a monetary standpoint.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, Virginia Beach, the Commonwealth of Virginia and its Congressional Delegation are prepared to work with you, the Navy, and the Department of Defense so that we can provide the best military value for our nation's defense. When you closely analyze the evidence it will be clear beyond any doubt that Oceana has the best attributes for our Navy and our nation's defense and also, the best fiscal option for U.S. taxpayers. I am confident that you will uphold the DoD's and the Navy's decision to keep Oceana open and serving our naval aviation training and operation. Thank you for your vitally important service to our country.

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Training is touch-and-go around Oceana

By JACK DORSEY, The Virginian-Pilot

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Cmdr. Dave "Mongo" Koss checks an F/A-18 at Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach. Photos by Bill Tiernan/The Virginian-Pilot.

VIRGINIA BEACH — The Navy has long stressed training the way it fights.

But at Oceana Naval Air Station, that is no longer the case. It has been years since the base's Navy pilots have been able to practice like they fight, and the gulf between the two is growing.

The reason: jet noise.

The chief purpose of Oceana, the Navy's East Coast master jet base, is to train pilots to take off and land on aircraft carriers. In recent years, however, Oceana officials have modified training to mitigate jet noise for neighboring residents.

At Oceana and Fentress, an auxiliary practice field in Chesapeake, war planes now fly vastly different patterns than they would if they were approaching or leaving an actual carrier. They fly higher, come in steeper and follow awkward flight routes.

And according to Capt. Tom Keeley, Oceana's commanding officer, the Navy is out of alternatives.

"We are at the limit," Keeley said.

Continued development near the airfields has raised concerns that the Navy might eventually move its operations from Oceana, which is now the military's most-encroached-upon air base.

Oceana has more people – about 120,000 – living in its high-noise contours than any airfield in the country except Miami International Airport, which has roughly 124,000.

And development pressures are increasing as Virginia Beach and Chesapeake look for more places to build homes. City and Navy officials are trying to hammer out a long-range plan to manage growth while allowing the Navy to continue training pilots.

The Navy is hoping to build another auxiliary field in North Carolina, to take some of the pressure – and noise – away from Fentress. But those plans have hit legal roadblocks, and there is no telling when, or even if, the field will be built.

In the meantime, Keeley does his best to schedule flight operations that provide the necessary practice for pilots but limit the roar of engines over residences. Technically, the jets can fly whenever and almost wherever they want – but Navy officials try to minimize nighttime and Sunday morning flying.

Keeley, who flew at Oceana as a bombardier/navigator in an A-6 Intruder in the late 1970s, said he has even honored specific requests on occasion, such as not flying during a certain time period because of a wedding or public function.

But with Oceana fielding roughly 220,000 takeoffs and landings each year and Fentress getting about 140,000, Keeley and other Oceana commanders have found it challenging to train pilots properly while keeping the community happy.

At both fields, the repetitive activity relies heavily on “touch-and-go” exercises, in which pilots simulate a carrier landing then immediately take off and circle around for another landing.

Though the runways at Oceana and Fentress are longer, wider and safer than the deck of a carrier, Navy officials do their best to give pilots a target that resembles a flight deck. But you cannot replicate a carrier landing on solid ground.

“I shake like a leaf every time I land on a carrier at night, and I have done it 450 times,” said Lt. Cmdr. Dave Koss, an F/A-18 Hornet pilot with Strike Fighter Squadron 87. “I literally roll out and my knees are shaking.”

Flying at Oceana and Fentress is safer for the pilots than working off a carrier, but because of neighborhoods and buildings around the airfields, patterns are modified – most importantly in the steeper approach.

With carrier landings, pilots are at about 800 feet when they’re a mile out, then they decelerate and descend to 600 feet before lining up and coming aboard. At Oceana, the approach is at 1,500 feet, dropping to 1,000; at Fentress, it’s 1,000 feet, dropping to 800.

Lt. Cmdr. Mark Sullivan, an F-14 pilot and veteran landing signal officer with Fighter Squadron 211, has spent countless hours at the unforgiving steel stern of an aircraft carrier guiding approaching pilots. He also has pulled considerable duty at the darkened end of a concrete Fentress runway. The difference in approaches is dramatic, he says.

“It’s similar to having a guy practice on a 10-foot basketball hoop and then all of a sudden reduce the hoop down to 8 feet,” Sullivan said. “They are just going to be shooting rocks for the first couple of times.”

Development around the airfields has brought other changes to the way pilots train. When operating off carriers, pilots rely heavily on instrumentation; here they use specific visuals.

"When you fly at Fentress," Koss said, "your pattern is looking down on the ground: 'OK, here is that road; I am good to go. There's that guy's house I don't want to fly around.'" The landmarks also can be obstacles.

"This whole neighborhood is off limits to us," Sullivan said, pointing to a map of Fentress. "So we fly around this farm on this side. We stay outside this road here, cut back in on this side so we don't cross the Intracoastal, go all the way out here and now drive over to try to get on line."

Capt. Mark Mills, who commands Air Wing One at Oceana, says flight patterns at Fentress are a half-mile wider than those used at the carrier.

"We do it, obviously," Koss said, "but it's not easy because we are creatures of habit. You are trying to establish good, solid habit patterns."



Cmdr. David Silkey, executive officer of VFA 87 Golden Warriors, and Lt. Cmdr. Dave Koss, operations officer of VFA 87, prepare to go onto the flight line to conduct an inspection of the F/A-18 s they'll be flying on a training mission.

Training at Oceana and Fentress, pilots are unable to get into the rhythm they do with an actual carrier pattern. And while they practice for emergencies, it's just not the same.

"We have trained them to fly a certain way," Sullivan said, "how to set his fuel flow, how much angle of bank to use, when to look outside and when to look inside.

"Now you send them to the scariest environment you can possibly imagine: pitch black, the deck is going up and you hear the call on the radio for 'Power! Power!' then 'Wave off!' – blood-curdling calls that scare the heck out of you.

"Now the guy is going to have to go back to that one thing that he learned – to set power and set angle of bank – and he is going to struggle."

There are 265 aircraft assigned to Oceana, a number that has been falling. Just three years ago, the base had 316 planes; in 2010, it is scheduled to field 231 aircraft.

Oceana has 145 F/A-18C Hornets, seven Super Hornets and 80 F-14 Tomcats, but the Tomcats are being phased out. By the end of 2006, they are all expected to be retired.

The current model of Hornets also will be augmented by more F/A-18 E and F model Super Hornets, which will be trickling in this fall and will begin flying regularly next spring.

Eventually, there will be 120 of them based at Oceana, and by everyone's admission, the Super Hornets are louder than anything now flying here.

"It is going to change the look and sound of what is flying in and around Oceana," said Cmdr. C.J. Deni, commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 211, which has operated from Oceana for 55 years.

"We want the community to be ready for it and we want to maintain our relationship with the community. We don't want to see the rules and procedures continue on a trend that will make it more difficult for us in the future."

Jet fighters are not the only aircraft that train at Oceana and Fentress – the E-2C Hawkeye radar planes and C-2 Greyhound cargo planes based in Norfolk also practice at the airfields.

Some of the activity at the Navy airfields involves qualifying new pilots to land and take off of carriers. But much of it is also refresher work, allowing more experienced pilots to keep up their skills or re-qualify .

Because of the risky nature of their work, carrier pilots are constantly being tested.

Sometimes, the Navy requires them to be re qualified twice in one year.

The standard rule for each pilot is to conduct two day time periods and six night time periods before being qualified. Each period has six landings.

Weather, operational commitments and maintenance requirements can make scheduling the necessary practice sessions difficult. But the impact of residential development around the airfields continues to generate the most problems.

Koss recalls carefree days of flying from Cecil Field, Fla., which the Navy closed in 1999.

"Cecil was out in the middle of nowhere," he said. "We took off and went right over the ocean and did our mission. We went straight to the bombing targets and did our mission. There was no 'Be at this altitude. Be at this airspeed.' It was 'Go do your stuff and come back.' "

But at Oceana, they do things differently. In addition to the adjustment in approach altitude, flights heading off shore get over water as quickly as possible to lessen jet noise.

Southbound departures are not allowed to climb above 4,000 feet until they are 15 miles away from Oceana. Then they can climb, dumping their jet noise and exhaust over the water instead of over homes.

Helicopter pilots used to approach and leave Oceana over Rudee Inlet, an easily spotted landmark from the air. But now they are routed in and out above Camp Pendleton, the state's seaside military reservation.

The Oceana pilots say they can see the advancing encroachment around the Virginia Beach field every time they return from deployment.

“Going back and forth on cruise is just amazing,” Sullivan says. “Leave this town for six months and it is a different town when you come back.”

Among the complaints Keeley says he hears from residents is that the planes at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton don't seem to create nearly the noise issue that the Navy jets do.

That, Keeley says, is because Langley pilots take off, conduct their missions, then return and land. They don't have to practice countless touch-and-go landings because they never land on carriers.

“We already know how to take off and land on 8,000- or 12,000-foot runways,” Keeley said. “What we practice is how to land on about 200 feet of that carrier deck.”



An F/A-18 Hornet from Oceana Naval Air Station turns after a touch-and-go landing at the Navy's Fentress auxiliary landing field in Chesapeake. Carrier training requires pilots to do numerous touch-and-go's.

Oceana pilots sense that they alternate between being viewed as heroes and villains in their home community – heroes after returning from deployments, villains while flying practice missions over Hampton Roads.

Their safety records are strong; considering the more than 300,000 annual takeoffs and landings they conduct, accidents are rare. The last major incident here involving an F-14 or F/A-18 was in 2001 at Fentress, when a Tomcat belly-landed with its wheels up. Before that, another Tomcat crashed at Oceana in 1996. None of the crew was injured in either accident.

“We are doing whatever we can to operate out of here safely,” said Cmdr. Dave J. Silkey, executive officer of Strike Fighter Squadron 87, a Hornet unit.

Pilots say they have heard residents question the need for them to fly so often, especially at night. But night training is essential because during combat, most missions take place during the cover of darkness.

“Every flight we do has a purpose,” Koss said. “We don't go out and showboat.”

Plus, the jets have recording devices that provide a detailed paper trail of the flight – the altitude, speed and location of the jet at any time.

“So if someone says this jet flew over my house, we will actually go and pull the tapes out of the jet,” Koss said.

Despite the noise-induced friction between the Navy and the community, pilots say they like flying out of Oceana and enjoy the lifestyle it affords their families.

"We are trying tremendously hard to work with the Virginia Beach community," Silkey said. "We are adapting our patterns in every possible way. We love being here. This a great place to grow up and live."

Navy officials will not comment on the upcoming BRAC 2005 – the Pentagon's latest round of base realignment and closure, designed to streamline the nation's military by closing or realigning bases and commands.

As the Navy's master jet base on the East Coast, Oceana would appear to be safe from closure or losing planes – except for the encroachment issue. And jet noise already has played a role in some jets not being located at Oceana.

Partly because of the noise factor, two Navy Hornet squadrons were sent to the Marine Corps Air Station at Beaufort, S.C., when the jets were moved from Cecil Field in the mid-1990s. And a year ago, the Navy announced it would put two Super Hornet squadrons at the Marine Corps base in Cherry Point, N.C.

Initially, the Navy wanted to have all of the Super Hornets at Oceana. But noise concerns led to the proposal of a new practice field to ease the load at Fentress. The Navy chose a site in Washington County, N.C., for the new airstrip – and then gave two squadrons to Cherry Point so the state could reap some economic benefit in exchange for the rural runway 70 miles south of Virginia Beach.

Opponents of the Washington County airfield have had recent success in stalling the project. Navy officials still insist that the plan will go through, but it has hit a significant legal roadblock. A recent ruling prohibits the Navy from purchasing any more land for the proposed 30,000-acre site, and there is no indication when the next step might be taken.

A delay in building the airstrip, or cancellation of the field, would hamper the Navy's goal of trying to reduce jet noise in Hampton Roads and could put the future of the base more at risk.

How Oceana will fare in BRAC 2005, or future realignments, remains to be seen, but Keeley said there is no question about the importance of the base's mission.

"Since 1990, every carrier air wing stationed here has seen combat," Keeley said.

And with the global war on terrorism showing no signs of letting up, he expects Oceana's contributions to remain significant.

The challenges remain considerable, as well.

Keeley's job of balancing the demands of the training with the concerns of the community will only get tougher when the noisy Super Hornets arrive.

For now his juggling act is working, Keeley said, but, "We are not training like we fight."

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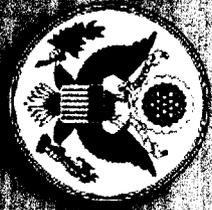
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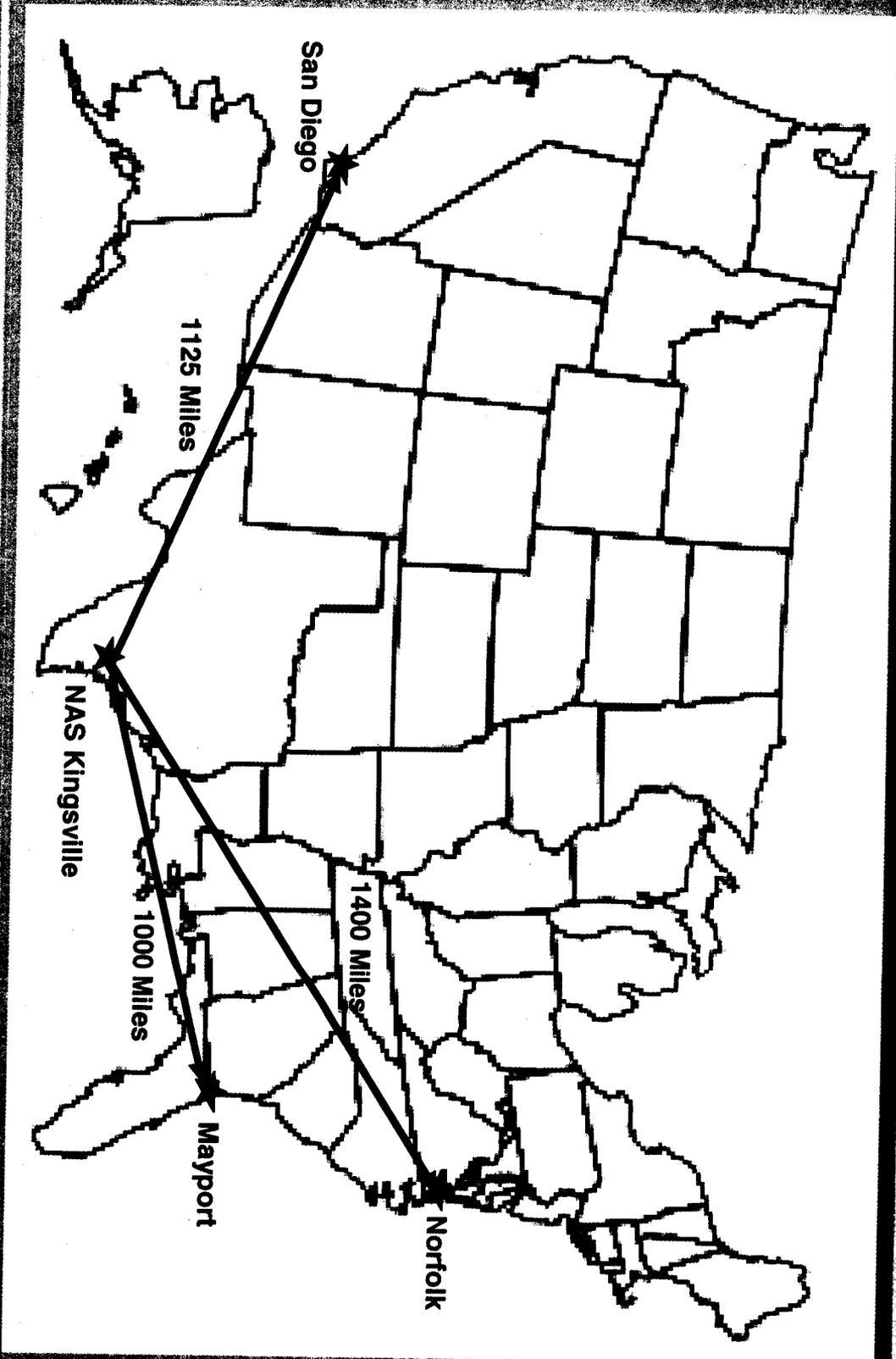
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DRAFT Internal Working Document – Not for distribution under FOIA**Regional Hearing – NAS Oceana, VA****Questions****For DoD Officials:**

If DoD or Navy officials testify that to open Cecil Field would be too expensive, ask the following questions?

1. Does the Navy know what the State of Florida will offer regarding land and facilities re-acquisition or the costs of relocating present commercial and industrial activities?
2. Does the Navy have an accurate estimate of the hangar, ramp and administrative and support space (by square feet) that would be needed to host all the Navy's east coast strike fighter assets and supporting aircraft, personnel and equipment?
3. Does the Navy have an accurate estimate of what facilities improvements have been made in and around Cecil?

If DoD or Navy officials testify that the airspace around Cecil Field is encroached by commercial activity, ask the following questions?

1. Is that view of encroachment shared by the FAA in the Jacksonville Area?
2. Please compare the airfield departure restrictions between Oceana and Cecil for jet departures to the offshore training areas?
 - a) What are the restrictions or course rules that Oceana aviators must use to depart from Oceana to limit noise levels?
 - b) What were the restrictions or course rules in place at Cecil Field in the late 90s?

concerning Naval Air Station Oceana. We want them to know – that their inputs are appreciated and taken into consideration as a part of our review process. And while everyone in this room will not have an opportunity to speak, every piece of correspondence received by the commission will be made part of our permanent public record, as appropriate.

Senator Warner, Senator Allen, Governor Warner, and Admiral Mullen, I welcome all of you to this hearing and look forward to your testimony.

I now request our witnesses to stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment statute. The oath will be administered by Rumu Sarkar, the Commission's Designated Federal Officer.

understands that there are currently nearly 200 residential buildings approved for development in the Accident potential Zones around NAS Oceana.

In addressing these questions we must all, every one of us, remember that every day we send young men and women to sea, wearing wings of gold. They accept an obligation to place their lives on the line for us and we have a reciprocal obligation to them ----- to ensure that their training is not unnecessarily limited by artificial or unrealistic constraints.

The Commission is committed to keeping our deliberations and decisions devoid of politics and ensuring that the people and communities affected by the BRAC proposals have, through our site visits and public hearings, a chance to provide us with direct input on the substance of the proposals and the methodology and assumptions behind them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of involved citizens who have already contacted the Commission and shared with us their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions about the base closure and realignment proposals. This week alone we have received nearly 2000 comments from Virginians

I can not help but note the analogy of a Lt. Commander landing signal officer quoted in a September 2004 article published by the Hampton Roads Virginian-Pilot. He compared practice at Oceana before landing on a carrier to practicing basketball on a 10 foot hoop and then suddenly reducing the hoop to 8 feet.

The Commission's agenda may read: "NAS Oceana", but the issue is much more than a base. The question that the Navy, our nation and our communities must answer is: "How do we ensure that the Naval aviators our nation orders into harm's way can train like they will have to fly, and fight, when they deploy with the fleet?"

I want to be clear that I do not have a predetermined answer to this question. The Commission's goal this afternoon is a thorough airing of the questions created by encroachment surrounding Oceana. *and its impact on training and readiness - military values* While we recognize the very recent steps taken by local governments to contain future encroachment, the past record of development creates a sense of uncertainty with respect to consistent enforcement, as well as a sense of uncertainty with property owners who have development rights that predate the 2003 agreement with the Navy. For example, the Commission

installations. Our concerns are evidenced by our questions at our first hearing in May. We took this action ---- not because of any desire to close more bases than the Secretary of Defense recommended, but to meet our obligation to the American people and to the uniformed men and women defending our freedoms.

We must make the best possible closure or realignment decisions, consistent with the military value criteria established by law.

Training and readiness are critical components of military power.

On Monday, August 1st, Commissioners visited NAS Oceana and met with representatives of fleet forces command, the base commanding officer, representatives of Naval Air Force, and the air wing commander.

We also spoke with several F/A-18 instructor pilots who described the effects of the flight restrictions and noise abatement procedures with which they must comply. We heard that

operations at Oceana are not consistent with operations at sea.

For example, we heard that the first time new pilots in the Fleet

~~Replenishment~~ ^{REPLACEMENT} Squadrons can fly the pattern as they would

around the ship is when they fly to the carrier for the first

time. A consistent comment from the students is that they wish they could have practiced this sooner.

Good Afternoon.

I'm Anthony Principi, and I will chair this Regional Hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. I'm pleased to be joined by my fellow Commissioners, Admiral Hal Gehman and Secretary Sam Skinner for today's session.

Gov Warner,

Sen Allen

We are honored that Senator Warner, Senator Allen and Governor Warner have carved time from their schedules for this afternoon's hearing and will follow Admiral Mike Mullen who will testify for the Navy.

I also want to welcome Congressman D'Amico, and the state's local officials who are with us today.

This hearing will be one of ~~his~~ ^{*Adm Mullen*} first duties as the Navy's 28th Chief of Naval Operations. ~~Admiral Mullen~~, I congratulate you on your promotion and wish you well as you take the con in the face of seas roiled by the winds of war. I can think of few callings more challenging, and I can think of few obligations more significant, than responsibility for the officers and sailors who bring our Navy to life.

On July 19th, this Commission voted to consider closure or realignment of eight installations not included in the Defense Department's recommendations. NAS Oceana is one of those

DCN:1197 JOHN WARNER, VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

July 29, 2005

Honorable Anthony J. Principi
 Chairman, Base Closure and Realignment Commission
 2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
 Arlington, Virginia 22202-3920

Dear Chairman Principi:

Section 2902 of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended, provides that "All the proceedings, information, and deliberations of the [Base Realignment and Closure] Commission shall be open, upon request" to the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services and other named persons. By including this provision in the BRAC statute, Congress authorized my subcommittee to provide oversight on the Commission's activities. It is in my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support that I write to you regarding the performance of the Commission in carrying out its statutory duties. I have been asked to specifically look at whether Department of Defense officials, who were personally or substantially involved in the preparation of information and recommendations concerning the closure or realignment of military installations, provided members of the BRAC Commission *ex parte* or uncertified information that has not been made part of the public record to date by the BRAC Commission.

The Congress, in enacting the BRAC statute, was aware that the process of base closure is a highly controversial one, and that the deliberations of the Commission must be open and transparent. Therefore, the Congress included a provision in BRAC law which requires that Department of Defense officials, in submitting information to the Commission, "shall certify that such information is accurate and complete to the best of that person's knowledge and belief." (Section 2903) Other provisions in the BRAC law direct that all testimony at public hearings of the Commission be under oath and establish the requirements for open hearings and deliberations, site visits, separation of the Commission's staff from the Department of Defense, and other protections.

Moreover, insofar as the Administrative Procedure Act applies to the deliberations of the Commission, private conversations would appear to violate that Act's limitations on *ex parte* communications, as well as its fundamental requirement that decisions of agencies be made on the basis of evidence of record. Any deviation from these legal requirements clearly gives rise to potential litigation that could delay or

DCN:11975

Honorable Anthony J. Principi

July 29, 2005

Page 2 of 2

impede the BRAC process or result in a federal court taking action that could call into question the integrity of the entire process.

Apart from the potential legal ramifications is the risk of undermining the public's perception of the integrity and reliability of the BRAC process. We must remember that there inevitably will be the need for a future Secretary of Defense to initiate a BRAC process. We must simply have the support of the public and the Congress to enact that process.

Because of the vital importance of these matters, I therefore request that you allow my staff to meet with appropriate representatives of the 2005 BRAC Commission no later than August 3, 2005 and that all relevant documentation be produced by August 10, 2005, which will allow for examination of all records, materials, and other evidence relating to any *ex parte* communications and to assess, if in fact they occurred, whether these *ex parte* communications may have unduly or improperly influenced the Commission's actions to date.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



John Ensign
Chairman

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management
Support

cc: The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld

DCN:11975



UNITED STATES SENATOR

John Ensign

NEVADA

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone (202) 224-6244

Fax (202) 228-2193

To: Chairman Principi (Christine Hill)

From: Senator Ensign

Re: BRAC Concern

Date: 29 July 2005

Number of pages: 3

(703) 699-2725

NOTES:

Senator Ensign has tried to reach Mr. Principi today without success.

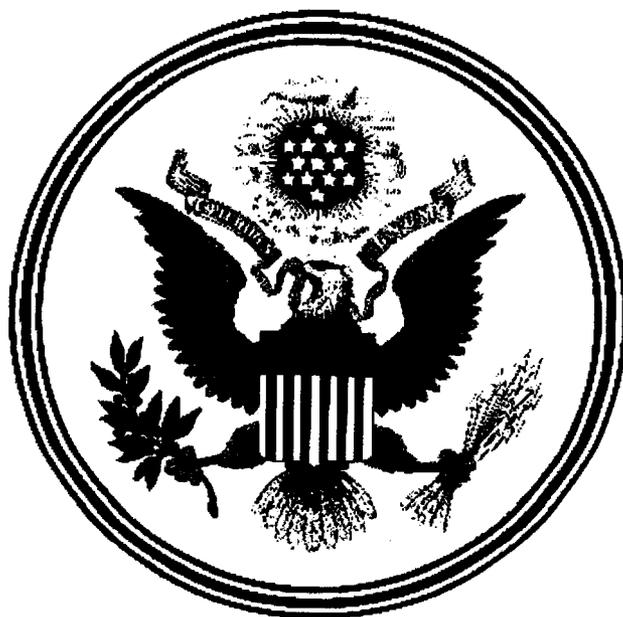
- J. Ensign

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The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman

**DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND
REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**



MEDIA BRIEFING BOOK
N.A.S. OCEANA, REGIONAL HEARING



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- C. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- D. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC

Media Advisory

**Sequence
of Events**

TIME:

Doors Open to Public at 12:00PM
Hearing Coverage- Senate Hart Hearing Room 216
1:00PM-2:00PM / MEDIA PRE-SET 11:30AM

Media Availability – The BRAC Commission's media availability will begin promptly 15 minutes after the end of the hearing.

Logistical information for media:

Credentialed media please contact appropriate media gallery for coverage information.

Credentialing and Media Inquiries:

Credentials may be requested via this website up until 24 hours prior to an event. After that, email the hearing contact. Please provide name and affiliation in your request.

For all media inquiries, please contact Robert McCreary, BRAC Commission Deputy Director of Communications, 703-901-7835 robert.mccreary@wso.whs.mil

**2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points for NAS Oceana**

The commission is especially aware of the potential impact its recommendations carry on the community and local economy, should those suggestions be enacted, and therefore welcomes community input as a source of information, however the preeminent factor in the commissions deliberations must be military value.

- The Commission is completely non-political and non-partisan in nature, as the Commissioners were appointed by the President and key Congressional leaders from both parties. The staff was hired based upon the individual's competency and availability.
- The Commission was established by the Congress to provide accountability to the public for the decisions to close or realign a military installation, and welcomes community input as an important factor in its decision-making process.
- *The commission is aware that Oceana is the primary Master Jet Air Base on the East coast. As such the commission will strongly consider the strategic and economic ramifications of closure.*
- *We would like to express out thanks to the community for their input into this process. Currently we have received almost 2000 e-mails and numerous written correspondence from the area and the commission is also carefully considering the suggestion to close NAS Oceana would have on the community.*

As the Department of Defense (DoD) seeks to streamline our military in order to meet changing global threats, the Commission will evaluate whether the DoD has taken all pertinent factors into account and has made its suggestions in accordance with the law.

- The Commission is an independent entity charged with thoroughly reviewing all pertinent factors before offering its recommendations.
- Although the Commission will evaluate the economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure of the installation could have on the surrounding community, the Commission's final decision as to whether or not to suggest NAS Oceana for closure will be based almost entirely on military value.
- *The commission is aware of the problems of encroachment may be causing. The commission will analyze the issue with regard to the installations ability to continue its operational and training missions.*

**2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Q's & A's for Visit to Oceana Naval Air Station**

Q1. Recently, Oceana Naval Air Station was added to the BRAC closure list. Does this suggest that the base will definitely be closed by the Commission?

A1. The addition of Oceana Naval Air Station to the suggested BRAC closure list only suggests that the Commission will review the possibility of closing the installation. The hearing that took place on July 19th provides the Commission the opportunity to further analyze options with regard to this BRAC round.

Q2. If the Commission votes to close Oceana Naval Air Station, it would be a vote to close the principal base for fighter jets on the East Coast. As such, Oceana Naval Air Station retains a specific strategic importance. Will the Commission take alternative sites into account in its analysis of Oceana Naval Air Station?

A2. The Commission will perform a thorough, accurate, and objective analysis, in a completely open and transparent manner, which will take into account, chiefly, the military value of Oceana Naval Air Station. In its analysis of Oceana, the Commission will consider alternative sites that are capable of continuing the operational and training activities currently conducted at Oceana.

Q3. Senator John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Governor Warner have vowed to fight the BRAC recommendations concerning Oceana. Will the political influence yielded by these men affect the Commission's final recommendation?

A3. The Commission will evaluate current military value of an installation, according to the process prescribed by statute. In determining military value the Commission will review several criteria including jointness, ease of mobility, and the installations role in the changing global threat paradigm.

Q4. If Oceana Naval Air Station is closed, the Virginia Beach area will lose an estimated 17,000 employees (military and civilian) and billions of dollars in revenue. Will the Commission consider the economic effects that closure of Oceana would have on the local and State economies?

A4. The Commission will review the Pentagon's proposal based upon an evaluation of the current military value of the installation. In addition, the Commission will analyze the projected economic costs and human impact of the DoD BRAC recommendations.

Q5. The issue of "encroachment" or urban development was listed as one of the primary reasons why the base was added to the BRAC closure list. Is encroachment an issue that has affected many other bases on the list? Can Oceana be saved if the issue of encroachment is properly addressed by the local community?

A5. The issue of encroachment is very important to the Commission's analysis of military installations. While the Commission understands the value of land in certain areas of the country, it also has to strongly consider the affect that encroachment has on the military value of an installation—with regard to operations and training exercises. In reviewing the issues of encroachment, the Commission will take into account both Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) and Accident Potential Zones (APZ).

Q6. If Oceana Naval Air Station is closed, what will happen to the property on which it resides?

A6. The question of what will happen with a base after its closure is under the purview of the Federal Government and DoD rather than the BRAC Commission. Applicable laws dictate that federal property must first be made available to other federal agencies.

If the property is deemed excess by the federal government then it will be made available to homeless assistance groups. It is only after this point that the land may be offered to the local government or to private developers at market value.

Q7. Oceana Naval Air Station has avoided closure in past BRAC rounds. Why should the current BRAC round yield a result different from the others?

A7. The statute, *not precedence*, establishes the criteria. As outlined by the statute, the Commission will place priority on military value while also taking into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of a base would have on the community surrounding that base. Information that is gathered in the analysis of a base, with the exception of information that is sensitive to national security, will be made accessible to the public.

Q8. Some have suggested that military assets at Oceana be transferred to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. Will the Commission take into account Moody's ability to sustain operations currently conducted at Oceana?

A8. The Commission will primarily consider the military value of the installation recommended for change based upon jointness, ease of mobility, and role in the changing global threat paradigm. However, the Commission will also consider the recommendations to relocate military assets and will determine if installation slated to receive assets have the necessary infrastructure to continue to carry out operations.

Q9. How can the Community make the Commission aware of information that the Community feels may have been overlooked by DoD?

A9. The BRAC Commission encourages public input into this transparent and objective process. Community groups who wish to submit information for the appropriate regional hearing are urged to contact their Congressional representative. Additionally, the public may submit comments through the Commission's official website, which is www.brac.gov.

OCEANA NAVAL AIR STATION VIRGINIA

National News Articles

Navy's top admiral to testify at BRAC hearing on Oceana
Citing Sprawl, BRAC Panel Eyes Closure of Oceana Over DoD Opposition
Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Local News Articles

On Oceana, time to face reality
A Tale Of Two Bases: Bearers Of Good, Bad Noise
From a whisper to a roar
Isolating our military. Encroachment and economics aren't the whole Oceana story
A crash landing for Oceana hopes
Virginia's Loss Could Be Texas' Gain

Editorial/Opinion Articles

I've voted, without exception, to support Navy's positions
Senator, Let's Launch

National News Articles

Navy's top admiral to testify at BRAC hearing on Oceana

Associated Press
Sue Lindsey
July 29, 2005

The Navy's new chief will testify next week at a defense commission hearing on whether Oceana Naval Air Station should be among military bases it recommends for closure.

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, who became chief of naval operations July 15, will appear before the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission in Washington on Thursday, a spokeswoman said. The Navy has said it wants to keep the Virginia Beach base open, but Mullen's spokeswoman said she did not know the specifics of his testimony.

U.S. Sen. John Warner, R-Va., sent Mullen a letter Wednesday asking him to testify on behalf of retaining Oceana, the Navy's principal base for fighter jets on the East Coast.

"Commissioners must be provided the department's best military judgment and professional advice available on the military value of Naval Station Oceana," Warner wrote. "You are the most qualified to provide this testimony."

Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee who is leading the effort to keep Oceana open, also told Mullen that he would face "a difficult task to replicate this important installation."

Oceana, Virginia Beach's largest employer with nearly 17,000 on its military and civilian staff, is

home to about 140 F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets and about 50 F-14 Tomcats.

Oceana was a late addition to the bases that the BRAC Commission is considering recommending for closure. It was not on the Pentagon's original list in May, but the commission took the unusual step of adding it last week.

Commission researchers said neighborhood development is encroaching on pilots' ability to practice taking off and landing at all hours.

The BRAC panel will make its final decision next month about which bases to propose for closing or altering, with President Bush and Congress making a binding decision in the fall.

Four BRAC commissioners are scheduled to be in Virginia Beach on Monday to tour the base.

The city's mayor, Meyera Oberndorf, declared Monday "Support Oceana Day" and urged citizens to send e-mails "to let the BRAC commissioners know how much Oceana means to Virginia Beach."

Citing Sprawl, BRAC Panel Eyes Closure of Oceana Over DoD Opposition

Inside the Pentagon

Suzanne Yohannan

July 28, 2005

Severe encroachment from urban sprawl has prompted the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to consider shutting down a major Navy air base in Virginia and moving its assets to another location, despite Defense Department opposition to the proposed closure.

The proposal, if adopted by the commission, could also have repercussions for the Navy's controversial plans to build an outlying landing field (OLF) in North Carolina to support the Virginia-based F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircraft, some of which are currently based at Naval Air Station **Oceana**, Virginia Beach, VA.

The **BRAC** Commission voted 7-1 July 19 to consider either closing or significantly realigning the major jet base located at **Oceana**. The commission will evaluate this option over the next several weeks and make a final decision before Sept. 8, when its final list of base closures and realignments is due to be submitted to the president, according to a commission spokeswoman.

The commission earlier this month also asked Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld what consideration DOD had given in the 2005 **BRAC** round to moving the master jet base from **Oceana** to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia, due to the severe encroachment problems at **Oceana**.

An analyst with the commission noted in July 19 testimony that the Navy has been unable to halt increasing development surrounding **Oceana** -- the country's busiest master jet base -- which is constraining the Navy's operational and training capability at both **Oceana** and the nearby Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress.

"Despite significant efforts by the Navy and local community leaders over the last 30 years to

limit the encroachment, developers' demands and property rights issues have trumped the Navy's objections to new building in the high noise and accident potential zones, also known as APZs," **BRAC** Commission analyst Bill Fetzer testified.

For instance, flight patterns at Fentress must comply with noise-abatement procedures "demanded by neighborhood developments" near the field, Fetzer said. Fetzer proposed relocation of all the squadrons, personnel, equipment and support from **Oceana** to an alternative site.

The Navy is also facing lawsuits by numerous property owners over noise caused by operations at **Oceana**.

One observer says the dispute over **Oceana** underscores the growing incidence of closure due to encroachment. Retired Army Judge Advocate General Maj. Gen. Hugh Overholt says encroachment has played an "enormous" role in all of the **BRAC** rounds, with many of the bases closed in earlier rounds located in dense metropolitan areas.

Overholt, who now advises a private sector group that is advocating for keeping two military facilities in eastern North Carolina open, said that at last week's **BRAC** Commission deliberations one commissioner alluded to the view of many that the question of closure for **Oceana** is not "if" but "when."

DOD and the Navy are defending their decision not to propose closure of **Oceana** due to encroachment. Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Robert Willard, speaking before the commission July 18, asserted that "from the Navy's vantage point, we believe that **Oceana** continues to serve the fleet well, that the challenges that you mention regarding encroachment and **Oceana** have been and are manageable, that as we look forward to recapitalizing our fighter fleet and the advent of the Joint Strike Fighter in the 2012 to 2015 time frame, there may very well need to be considerations and adjustments made, but that yet remains to be seen."

The Navy dismissed Moody as an alternative site, due to the significant cost and the Air Force's needs for Moody, which would prevent the Navy from bringing the entire **Oceana** wing to the base. Some encroachment problems would likely also arise at Moody with such a transfer, according to testimony from another **BRAC** commission analyst. Other relocations were also dismissed due to a lack of over-water training areas, according to the commission's staff.

While the Navy considers **Oceana** to be the most suitable option for the master jet base, it concedes that development around the base "presents significant challenges to long-term operational requirements," Fetzer said. To deal with these issues, the service is now pushing a proposal to eventually build a new master jet base on the East Coast, outside of the **BRAC** time frame, which ends in 2011.

"Selecting a location and building from the ground up is by far the preferred choice as it gives us the most flexibility to ensure we accommodate future capabilities, while allowing for sufficient 'buffers' to preclude potential encroachment issues," acting Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England said in a July 14 written response to the **BRAC** Commission. "This approach, if pursued, would allow for a truly modern air station, with commensurate energy, environmental and community consideration designed into the facility from the very beginning."

The commission's consideration of whether to shutter or realign the major jet base at **Oceana** comes as the Navy is fighting an environmental lawsuit over its plans to build an outlying landing field in eastern North Carolina to be used by several squadrons of Super Hornet aircraft to be

based at **Oceana**. The Navy wants to build an additional OLF in Washington and Beaufort counties, NC, to practice aircraft carrier landings, but environmentalists have charged the Navy failed to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in considering the environmental impacts of such a project.

Closure of **Oceana** would quash any need for the OLF at the eastern North Carolina site, says one environmentalist involved in the case. The source explained the Navy had looked to the OLF "to export noise" from **Oceana**, but without planes at **Oceana**, the OLF becomes unnecessary. Under the Navy's proposal, the location of the OLF is midway between **Oceana**, where most of the Super Hornets would be based, and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, in Havelock, NC, where two of the squadrons would be based.

But a Navy spokesman calls it "inappropriate" to speculate on any future potential impacts from a **BRAC** Commission decision on **Oceana**. He says the commission's July 19 vote has "no immediate impact" on the eastern North Carolina OLF.

And Overholt, the former judge advocate general, says the OLF's future is dependent on where **Oceana's** assets are directed to go, if the **BRAC** Commission decides to realign them. A move to Moody would make the OLF in North Carolina less critical in the long term, but he speculated that the Navy may look to consider building a new master jet base at the several sites it studied for siting the OLF, including at the controversial Washington/Beaufort location.

The Navy looked to these other locations for an OLF due to the encroachment problems, particularly jet noise, at Fentress, according to the service.

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report

Michael Bruno

July 20, 2005

The independent **BRAC** Commission voted 8-1 on July 19 to add Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine, to the Base Realignment and Closure list for consideration, but a majority of the commissioners decided against doing the same for the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii.

The day before, Michael Wynne, deputy undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, had told the commission that the Pentagon considered shuttering Brunswick completely, but the base was kept open due to its strategic presence in the northeastern United States and for its surge capabilities.

Likewise for Pearl Harbor, Wynne said the shipyard was among four naval shipyards analyzed for closure, but military judgment favored keeping the base open because of its "strategic location and multiplatform capabilities."

Instead, Naval Shipyard Portsmouth, Maine, was chosen for closing over Pearl Harbor because it would eliminate excess capacity but still satisfy Defense Department desires to build military capability in the Pacific, a **BRAC** Commission aide said July 19 (DAILY, May 18).

Commission members, who convened on Capitol Hill July 18 and 19, were split on Pearl Harbor partly due to unanswered questions about the degree of the Navy's self-described "excess" shipbuilding capacity.

"We need to determine, is there excess capacity or not? It's not clear to me right now that we know," said commissioner and retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman. He voted to add Pearl Harbor to the **BRAC** list.

"I'm not convinced that Portsmouth should be closed, either," said commissioner and retired Army Gen. James Hill. He voted against adding Pearl Harbor.

Navy mulls jet base

Meanwhile, Wynne said July 18 that the Navy is considering building a new 21st Century master jet base, but it would occur "outside the **BRAC** window and **BRAC** timeframe." At the same time, the Navy eyed Moody Air Force Base, Ga., as an East Coast master base.

But Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Robert F. Willard told the panel that Moody is a "World War II vintage air base," and would need almost \$500 million in one-time military construction costs to build up.

Wynne said the Navy decided to keep Naval Air Station **Oceana**, Va., because it was the "most suitable option."

On July 19, commissioners added **Oceana to the BRAC** list for consideration for further realignment by a vote of 7-1. Many said they voted in favor of adding **Oceana** so that they could better review the Navy's options. By 7-1, they voted against adding Moody.

Local News Articles

On Oceana, time to face reality

The Virginia Pilot

July 25, 2005

If **Oceana** Naval Air Station's mission can't be saved, if the next generation of thunderous fighters must indeed take off from runways someplace else, Virginia Beach would be arguably better off with a quick military retreat instead of a prolonged campaign of attrition.

According to a letter and to testimony before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, the Pentagon sees decades of commercial and residential encroachment as eventually making the base's mission impossible in the Beach.

Though it could survive this **BRAC** go-round, this may well be **Oceana's** last reprieve. The Navy hopes to eventually replace the 6,000-acre master jet base with a new, bigger facility elsewhere, one on a plot so large that surrounding development will never be an issue.

That's a very tall order. It has been decades since an airfield of that magnitude, civilian or military, has been erected on the East Coast.

If **Oceana** were to leave Virginia Beach under **BRAC**, it would take thousands of jobs and

billions of dollars with it, not to mention the military families that for 60 years have helped make the city what it is. But, under **BRAC**, there would be some federal help to minimize the economic blow from loss of the base, money for purging it of safety and environmental hazards, and some advice on figuring out what to do with the property.

Painful as that would be, there are worse alternatives.

The Pentagon could turn **Oceana** into a different kind of military facility that would attract neither the money nor the people a master jet base does. The Beach would still have thousands of acres of prime real estate out of commission and off the tax rolls, and far less economic benefit to show for it.

Or the government -- conceivably -- could just shut it down. City Councilman Richard Maddox, who worked on an agreement between Virginia Beach and the Navy to protect **Oceana**, calls that the "nightmare scenario," one that includes a huge plot of land lying waste behind a high fence, not generating any taxes, or providing any room to roam.

"If the handwriting is on the wall, prudence would dictate that we should be looking at a number of different scenarios," Maddox said in a Pilot story last week.

For the first time in memory, discussing such possibilities is something more than front parlor speculation. It's self-defense. And it's simply prudent governance.

"To put your head in the sand and say it will never happen is not realistic," Councilman Peter Schmidt said. "We need to look out for the best interests of Virginia Beach in the long term, with the potential of **Oceana** not being there."

If the jets can't fly, if **Oceana** won't be the city's largest employer, Virginia Beach must start now to consider life without the base, and -- just as crucially -- how to say farewell in a way that best protects what the military will leave behind.

A Tale Of Two Bases: Bearers Of Good, Bad Noise

The Daily Press (Newport News)

Jim Hodges

July 24, 2005

The difference between Langley Air Force Base and **Oceana** Naval Air Station on the base closure list is a case of sound and fury.

Every nine minutes or so, an F-15 or F/A-22 comes in over Back River at about 245 mph on a path that's gradual and shallow and which leads to the softest, quietest touchdown possible.

Col. Tom Tinsley calls it a "don't-spill-the-coffee-on-the-guy-in-first-class" landing.

The pilot cuts power, works the brakes and eventually coasts to a stop on an adjoining concrete parking lot.

Langley Air Force base has received five complaints this year from people who say their lives are disrupted by the noise. Two came from western Virginia, where there wasn't an Air Force plane within 100 miles at the time.

To the southeast of Langley, 26 miles as the Hornet flies, every two and a half minutes, an F-18 comes in at a hard angle over Virginia Beach Boulevard and slams down hard on the concrete runway to dissipate energy. The pilot then pours on the afterburner, raw fuel spilling into jet exhaust to push the plane back into the air with a roar that makes a rock concert in an arena sound like "shuush!" in a library.

Oceana Naval Air Station is under assault from Citizens Concerned About Jet Noise, a citizens group that claims 5,000 members who complain constantly, both to the base and to Washington.

The difference in how they fly their airplanes offers insight into why Langley is on the military's favored roll and **Oceana** was added to the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure list on Tuesday.

"We do have noise complaints, but you have to remember that our base has more water around it than over there," says Tinsley, deputy commander of the First Fighter Wing at Langley, adding that he could not speak for **Oceana**. "When we're taking off on a heading of zero-8 over an eastbound runway, as soon as we break ground, we're over water."

When they take off to the west, the pilots quickly turn north, then east, heading back over the airfield and out over the Atlantic. For a while, they're over populated areas -- including Bethel Manor and the Tabb school district -- but they're gaining altitude as quickly as possible to cut back on the noise. At **Oceana**, the F-18s are over houses in any direction.

Frequently, they're over Hal Levenson's house in Great Neck Meadows.

"They're at 400 to 500 feet and very loud," says Levenson, a founding member and spokesman for the jet noise group. "You can't go outside. You can't hear anyone speak, you can't listen to the TV. I have headphones to listen to the radio."

He adds that the noise occasionally reaches 107 decibels over his home, 1.5 miles north of the end of one of four **Oceana** runways.

That's as loud as an automobile horn from three feet away.

Their missions, even the nature of the services themselves, are other reasons Langley can peacefully coexist with Hampton while **Oceana** and Virginia Beach seem constantly at odds.

Langley offers a 10,000-foot runway and a wide expanse of buffer zone, both wet and dry.

Oceana's longest runway is 12,000 feet, but the naval aviation's mission is predicated on being able to land an airplane on that part of it which corresponds to the flight deck of a ship.

"They paint an aircraft carrier on the runway over there," Tinsley says.

"As soon as they touch down they go to full power, just in case (they miss the arresting cable) on that short runway they have on the ship."

It's a safety maneuver for the pilots, but even when they cut off afterburners at **Oceana's** edge, the sound carries into neighborhoods.

The existence of those neighborhoods is the primary threat to **Oceana's** continued use by the Navy. That existence involves two acronyms that are in vogue these days: AICUZ --air installation compatible use zones -- and APZ -- accident potential zones.

One has much to do with noise, the other everything to do with danger.

The **BRAC** Commission has been told that the Virginia Beach City Council approved rezoning requests opposed by the Navy 73 percent of the time in recent years.

Most of the time that has involved noise, primarily in the 65-decibel range.

That's about the same amount of racket your vacuum cleaner makes.

Two Lynnhaven elementary schools, Brookwood and Parkway, are in the 65-decibel zone.

At Langley, "I look at every Hampton city plan for development," says Vic Johnston, the base's director of community services. "If there is input needed, we give it."

In one case, Johnston says, a Langley engineer suggested to a developer that more insulation be added to new houses to muffle jet noise.

"They do their business, we do ours," Johnston says of **Oceana**. "We know that land over here is at a premium and developers want to make money."

At Langley, too, flights are more consistent because it's an operational base. And there are only about 60 F-15s and four F/A-22s, with more on the way.

Oceana has both operational and training roles for its 254 fighters.

"We are going combat training every day," says Tinsley, "so we take off over water into Area 386 (in the Atlantic) and fight out there anywhere from 1,000 feet above the water to 60,000 feet above the water. We go supersonic out there and make all the noise we want 15 miles from the coastline. "When we come back in, we come back in to land and that's it."

Flights are from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. **Oceana's** planes also fight offshore and at a North Carolina range. But more important to critics is aircraft carrier landing practice.

Often called "skip landings," they are conducted well into the night and frequently at **Oceana's** auxiliary airfield at Fentress in Chesapeake. About 140,000 "skip landings" a year are made at Fentress.

When a carrier deployment is approaching, the exercises -- and resultant complaints -- increase. And they are a 24-7 operation. "Pilots train like they fight," says Troy Snead, public affairs officer at **Oceana**.

At Langley, the future is bright, with a new airplane, the Raptor.

"I was asked ... 'Are you worried about noise complaints?' " Tinsley said.

"I said, 'No. I'm worried about people driving up and down Armistead Boulevard running into each other to see what that airplane is doing.' "

Four **BRAC** commissioners are due at **Oceana** on Aug. 1 to look things over with a vote by September that could determine how long the base remains in the Navy inventory.

"The question is, what is perception and what is reality about **Oceana**?" says George Foresman, Gov. Mark Warner's chief adviser on **BRAC**. "To me, the real crux is whether a Navy pilot isn't able to do the maneuvers they need to do to get the job done." *

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE

Part of what keeps the airfield on the good side of the area:

- * Fighters: 64 (60 F-15s, four F/A-22s)
- * Takeoffs/landings: About one every 10 minutes
- * Runway: 10,000 feet
- * Takeoff/landing path: East-west (Back River to the east)
- * Hours of operation: 6 a.m.-10:30 p.m.

OCEANA NAVAL AIR STATION

Some reasons the facility has trouble with Virginia Beach:

- * Fighters: 254 (194 F/A-18s, 60 F-14s)
- * Takeoffs/landings: About one every 21/2 minutes
- * Runways: 3 of 8,000 feet, 1 of 12,000 feet
- * Takeoff/landing path: North-south, east-west (houses in each direction)
- * Hours of operation: 24 hours a day

From a whisper to a roar

The Virginia Pilot
Kate Wilttrout
July 24, 2005

In a cavernous Senate committee room on Capitol Hill, Meyera Oberndorf's face went pale. A hundred miles away, in Richmond, shouts alerted Gov. Mark R. Warner to the news.

The federal commission charged with realigning the nation's military bases had just done something many people in Virginia convinced themselves wouldn't, couldn't, shouldn't happen: It had voted - 7 to 1 - to consider closing **Oceana** Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach.

Warner and the state's senior U.S. senator, John Warner - chairman of the armed services committee, former secretary of the Navy - had spoken by phone minutes before the vote Tuesday. Neither expected any surprises.

Then came the shout from William Leighty, the governor's chief of staff. He'd been watching the meeting via webcast in an adjacent office.

"I remember silence in the room for, like, one, two, three, four seconds," Gov. Warner's press secretary Kevin Hall recalled. "I believe I uttered an expletive. And then the governor said, 'Get Senator Warner on the phone and track down Meyera.'"

Within hours, news releases were flying, strategy sessions scheduled, reassurances uttered.

Still, the question loomed: How did this happen? How did **Oceana** escape the Pentagon's gaze in May, when Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld released his base closure recommendations, only to become one of eight last-minute additions to the commission's black list?

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission insisted all along it wouldn't rubber-stamp the Pentagon's closure list. Now **Oceana** supporters believe it.

"If nothing else, this is a terrific wake-up call," said Virginia Beach City Councilman Richard Maddox. "Up until now, there has been a sense that it could never happen. There's some threshold decisions we've got to make about what we're willing to do and what we're not willing to do to keep **Oceana** here."

As one senior congressional staffer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, observed: "This whole thing has taken an interesting turn."

The commission had asked specifically about shifting **Oceana's** jets to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia, he noted, with the Pentagon replying that nothing in the inventory met the needs of **Oceana**.

"The commission just doesn't believe them," the staffer said.

On one level, the surprise came at the hands of commission member Samuel Knox Skinner. He had said moments before the vote that **Oceana** was too big a problem for **BRAC** to tackle. But he relented after the commission staff convinced him that they could add something to the debate about the jet base's future if it were placed on the list for possible closure.

Without his vote, the commission wouldn't have reached the seven-out-of-nine majority required to add a base to the list - a threshold that many observers saw as almost impossible to reach.

Skinner changed his mind, it seemed, in the spirit of "Why not? Why not keep talking and analyzing? What is there to lose?"

On another level, however, there had been signs of trouble along the way.

While many people assumed **Oceana** was safe after it stayed off Rumsfeld's list in May, the Defense Department's own report on recommended base closures noted that the Navy had examined the idea of shutting down the base.

According to documents released in May, the Navy's senior leadership even went so far as to ask that the Marine Corps air station in Beaufort, S.C., be kept off the **BRAC** list specifically because they were concerned about **Oceana's** viability as a tactical base and needed an alternative site.

In the months leading up to the May recommendations, documents show, Navy leadership also examined a scenario to close **Oceana** - but without another realistic location for its 244 fighter jets, concluded closure wasn't possible.

True to its word not to simply endorse the Pentagon's wishes, it didn't take long for the appointed commission to broach the topic of **Oceana**.

In its first week of hearings in mid-May, one commissioner - retired Army Gen. James T. Hill - said he was surprised **Oceana** wasn't slated for closure because of the residential and commercial development that's surrounded it, limiting operations and posing noise and safety concerns.

The following week, May 24 and 25, **BRAC** Commission Chairman Anthony Principi and Commissioner Lloyd Newton, a retired Air Force general, visited a number of Hampton Roads bases affected by the proposals. The pair didn't tour **Oceana** - a sign to some that the base wasn't a priority because any facility slated for closure requires a visit from at least two commission members.

But Principi and Newton didn't stay away from the topic of **Oceana** entirely.

According to commission documents, Capt. Tom Keeley, the commander of **Oceana**, met with the pair in Norfolk during their two-day trip. The 21-page brief he presented was titled "Encroachment Issues."

Principi and Newton apparently got the message. At a news conference May 25, Principi commented on "very, very significant encroachment at **Oceana** " but said it was premature to consider the base for closure.

Five weeks later, the commission made its doubts about **Oceana** even clearer.

On July 1, Principi asked in writing why the Pentagon hadn't considered closing **Oceana** and relocating its aircraft to Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga.

As required by the **BRAC** process, the commission must notify the Pentagon in writing that it's considering adding a base to the list. Gordon England, the acting deputy defense secretary, replied July 14 that a better alternative to moving **Oceana** would be building a new master jet base from the ground up.

The same day that England penned his response, a delegation of local and state officials and two retired admirals went to Washington to make their case for keeping **Oceana** off the list. Bob Matthias, assistant to Virginia Beach City Manager James Spore, said he took about 20 minutes to explain the city's efforts to work with the Navy to control development around the base.

Two **BRAC** staff members - one was Bill Fetzer, the commission's Navy-Marine Corps team

senior analyst - listened, then asked a lot of questions. They were already well-versed in city issues, Matthias said.

Though the group Citizens Concerned About Jet Noise has complained about the decibel levels of jets passing overhead, Matthias said the commission members didn't seem to care.

"Surprisingly, they said repeatedly that in their opinion, noise was not an issue," Matthias said. However, he added, they made it clear they were concerned about development in the potential crash zones around **Oceana**.

They asked about Virginia's strict property laws, particularly a provision called "by right," in which property owners have a right to develop their land without interference as long as it complies with zoning.

The discussion got specific, Matthias said, down to Virginia Beach City Council's decision two years ago to approve a rezoning request allowing condominiums on a site where a motel had been.

Matthias explained that the council saw rezoning the property on Laskin Road as an improvement because fewer people would reside inside the potential accident zone. The Navy thought otherwise and asked that the rezoning be denied.

"The Navy has its mission, which every one on council wants to support," Matthias said he told the staffers. "And the council has its hands pretty much tied by Virginia law."

Fetzer requested more information about that project, which the city forwarded the next day. On Tuesday, before the vote on **Oceana**, Fetzer used the Laskin Road project as an example of the problems at the base.

He showed the commission a map of Virginia Beach and pinpointed the project's location, then kicked what had been a routine municipal issue to the national stage.

"The commanding officer of NAS **Oceana** opposed that development in writing to the City Council on June the 5th, 2003, stating that residential land use was incompatible ... and should be prohibited," Fetzer told commissioners. "In November 2003, the City Council approved that project over the Navy's objections."

Oceana's supporters interpreted Fetzer's presentation as a sign they need to do a better job convincing the commission and its staff that both the city and the state are committed to protecting the base.

"We need to present this united front that **Oceana** needs to come off this list," Gov. Warner remarked later. "In this case, we have the support of the Navy. We have facts that we think were not fully presented to the commissioners."

Despite the shock of Tuesday's vote, many people think **Oceana** will emerge from this round of **BRAC** intact - if not unscathed.

"Even though they could close **Oceana**, it's clear that they have no intention of doing so," said Christopher Hellman, who tracks base closing issues at the Washington-based Center for Arms Control.

That's because, he said, the **BRAC** Commission also voted Tuesday not to consider major changes at Moody Air Force Base, meaning it wouldn't be designated as an option for **Oceana's** planes.

Hellman said it's clear commissioners feel the Navy needs to close **Oceana**, but they recognize that will be a long and complicated process, and they're just trying to help things along by keeping the talks going.

State Sen. Kenneth Stolle certainly hopes that's the case. He said he was surprised that seven commission members voted to add **Oceana** - but he feels that the group figured vigorous discussion wouldn't hurt.

"Every now and then, you need to get people's attention, and I think that's exactly what this is," he said. "I hope I'm right."

Staff writer Dale Eisman in Washington contributed to this report.

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Coming Monday What goes on at **Oceana** and, most important, what's at stake if it closes. Back in May, when **Oceana** didn't appear on the Pentagon's list of possible base closures, most assumed the base had nothing to worry about.

Now it's July, and with the base on the **BRAC** black list, the disbelief is deafening.

How could this have happened?

Isolating our military. Encroachment and economics aren't the whole Oceana story

The Virginia Pilot

David C. Earnest

July 24, 2005

LAST WEEK'S news that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission is once again considering the closure of **Oceana** Naval Air Station has renewed the political fight over the airfield's future.

Elected officials in Hampton Roads fear the loss of jobs, while residents hope for the end of jet noise. Yet both **BRAC** and elected officials seem to miss a more important point.

Oceana and other bases like it around the country represent more than jobs, money and clamorous inconvenience. They increasingly are important yet tenuous bonds between a society and a military that have grown apart during the last four decades.

No one disputes the problems that **Oceana** faces with the encroachment of Virginia Beach's growth along its entire perimeter. Navy pilots flying into and out of **Oceana** skirt beachfront high-rises and residential neighborhoods as they practice their take-offs and landings. Accidents

have occurred periodically, such as in 1986, when an A-6 Intruder which overran the airfield on landing and killed both the pilot and a pregnant woman driving on **Oceana** Boulevard.

And the Navy's own sound contour maps show noise levels greater than 65 decibels from Pungo to Bay Colony, including the entirety of the city's Oceanfront hotels.

Likewise, most local leaders acknowledge **Oceana's** importance to the economy of Virginia Beach and the Hampton Roads area. It is little wonder that Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf said she was "ecstatic" in May on hearing that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Navy recommended keeping **Oceana** open, and "shocked" at Tuesday's news.

No one is surprised that Virginia's congressional delegation and Gov. Mark Warner have vowed to pressure **BRAC** and the Pentagon to reconsider this latest threat to the base.

Unfortunately, all this discussion about **Oceana** tends to focus only on two aspects of the airfield: its economics and the city's encroachment on its perimeter.

The legislation that empowers **BRAC** to recommend closures requires the commission to consider eight criteria in its decisions: Four focus on the military value of the base, while four focus on the economic dimensions, including savings to the Pentagon from closure or realignment and the economic impact on local communities.

Naturally, elected officials are concerned about the jobs and welfare of their constituents and express their opposition to **Oceana's** closure in these terms. But **Oceana** and other facilities slated for closure serve a purpose in American society that is much broader than their economic benefits.

In many parts of the country, they are the only tangible connection most civilians have with the nation's military. In the post-Vietnam era of professional soldiers, the nation's citizenry increasingly has become isolated from the cadre of professionals who constitute our nation's military.

There is considerable evidence, furthermore, that our fighting men and women hold opinions and values that increasingly diverge from American society as a whole. A poll by the Military Times in 2003 showed that two-thirds of the military members they surveyed believe they have higher moral standards than the nation they serve.

The same poll and research done by the Triangle Institute of Security Studies in North Carolina suggest that active-duty servicemen and women, whether officers or enlisted personnel, increasingly feel alienated from the American people; are more conservative; tend to favor more unilateral foreign policies than the American public as a whole; and believe that civilian leaders do not have the military's best interests at heart.

The reverse also seems true: Civilians appear to value military service less than they used to, particularly when electing their representatives.

Social scientists have identified a number of reasons for this growing gap in civil-military relations. The turbulence of the Vietnam era and the all-volunteer force are two important sources. Today's military is attracting a much narrower variety of Americans than did the conscripted forces of World War II, or even of the early 1960s.

The era of the citizen-soldier appears gone, as fewer men and women bridge the divide between the military and civil society. The implications of this problem are clear: The growing lack of understanding between the military and American society ultimately makes both worse off. Our military is less effective, and our society is less secure.

Military bases remain one of the few tangible connections that communities have with the armed forces. Even if they are inconvenient neighbors, they are reminders to civilians not only of the costs that the fighting men and women bear for our safety, but also of our responsibility as citizens and voters to those who don the uniform.

Without military bases in our communities, we risk an even greater chasm in understanding between civilian and soldier, with unforeseeable consequences for the United States.

Oceana and other bases targeted by **BRAC** remind us as citizens of our responsibility to consider wisely the necessity and costs of sending our sons and daughters overseas to fight and die. Will communities without the whine of jet engines understand our soldiers any better than they do today? Will they be more likely to ask for needless sacrifices from the military, or less so?

For now, the answers to these questions are less important than the fact that neither **BRAC** nor our elected officials are asking them.

A crash landing for Oceana hopes

The Virginia-Pilot
July 21, 2005

Seeing it in black and white lends a disturbing reality to what was once just a threat: The nation's military leadership now believes **Oceana** Naval Air Station can't be saved.

To most observers, this has been clear for decades. Its fence line crowded with commercial development, its flight paths interrupted by houses and apartments, **Oceana's** last lifeline was the enormous cost of moving hundreds of fighters.

In the past few days, the Pentagon admitted it can't keep the jets flying at **Oceana**. When the noisy next generation of fighters takes to the skies in 10 years or 15, the Pentagon hopes it won't be over a Virginia Beach that has outgrown the Navy, even as the Navy has outgrown an increasingly crowded Virginia Beach. Call it a case of irreconcilable differences.

On Tuesday, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission added **Oceana** to the list of bases targeted for closure or realignment, the first official notice that separation at least, and perhaps divorce, may be coming. In the end, **Oceana** could be spared in this round of base closures, but it would probably only be a temporary reprieve.

The Pentagon believes **Oceana** should be saved -- for now -- only because it'll take too long and too much money to get a new base up and running, and because the alternatives face similar problems. **BRAC** may decide that's not reason enough. Whatever happens in the next few months, though, the Pentagon has decided it eventually needs an entirely new base, one that can be protected from the encroaching development that doomed **Oceana**:

"Selecting a location and building from the ground up is by far the preferred choice as it gives us the most flexibility to ensure we accommodate future capabilities, while allowing for sufficient 'buffers' to preclude potential encroachment issues," the Pentagon said in a letter to **BRAC** commissioners.

Given the effort and the expense already, not to mention its huge size, an outlying field planned for 30,000 acres in Washington County, N.C., appears among the best candidates for a new base. There are probably others. All of them, it is sure, will be fraught with political and legal challenges, and in the end may be no more attractive than a beleaguered and crowded **Oceana**.

While the Navy considers alternatives to Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach must consider alternatives to the Navy. The impact of an **Oceana** closure would be severe. A study a few years ago said closing the base could slow economic growth across the region, and throw the Beach into the equivalent of a one-year recession. It would cost the region more than 20,000 jobs, about 2 percent of the total employment.

Some businesses would collapse, the real estate market would soften, at least, and the Beach would lose an enormous number of military families that strengthen the backbone of city life.

Still, even the most dire predictions show the Beach and the region rebounding as **Oceana's** replacement -- whatever that is -- begins to take shape.

All this wouldn't happen for years, probably, but the Pentagon thinks it should happen. Given its record over the decades, it's hard to argue that the city government could now find the will to make the politically impossible decisions that could prevent **Oceana's** closure.

And so we find ourselves here. Not the end of the line, exactly, but near enough that we can see it.

Virginia Beach has dithered so long that it now stands to lose its largest employer and a big chunk of its civic identity.

It doesn't have the luxury of procrastination anymore. Regardless of the timing, the Beach has an enormous and painful task ahead of it: deciding what kind of city it wants to be once the Navy flies away.

Virginia's Loss Could Be Texas' Gain

San Antonio Express-News
Sig Christenson

WASHINGTON -- Base closure commissioners voted Tuesday to add a Navy flight training facility in Virginia to a list of installations to be considered for shutdown, a move that could bolster two South Texas installations.

The 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted to put Master Jet Base **Oceana** and seven other facilities on a list of 33 installations pegged for shutdown.

One of those, Ingleside Naval Station, could benefit from the decision, as well as Kingsville Naval Air Station, not on the list.

Commissioner Tom Hill, a Trinity University graduate, said at a hearing on Capitol Hill that **Oceana's** jets could find a home in Kingsville, and that Ingleside's deep-water port could handle an aircraft carrier.

But another commissioner with Texas ties said other bases could absorb **Oceana's** missions and that those on the Gulf Coast shouldn't get their hopes up.

"You really should not jump to any conclusions here," retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton told reporters after the hearing. "There's a lot of analysis that must be done by the staff and then there have got to be votes by myself and all my fellow commissioners. That could go in any direction."

As the hearing opened, **BRAC** Chairman Anthony J. Principi described it as one of the commission's "more important meetings."

The commission took no action on the Pentagon's proposed closure of Brooks City-Base, Naval Station Ingleside or Red River Army Depot in East Texas. A final vote on those recommendations will come late next month.

It also took no action on a huge shift in Air National Guard assets, one a Houston F-16A wing backers say is needed to protect the industrialized Gulf Coast. Hill called those recommendations "a mess" while the more conciliatory Principi told reporters they require a closer look.

"There are lots of issues, lots of questions," he said.

Bush must accept or reject the commission's findings by Sept. 8. Congress has 45 days to pass judgment on the list.

Installations in Maine, California and North Carolina and three Defense Finance and Accounting Service offices in the Midwest weren't as lucky. The decision to take a fresh look at Defense Department plans to consolidate 26 DFAS offices, one in San Antonio, into three mega centers drew little comment and no debate.

The panel doubts the ability of the mega centers to process checks for workers and businesses. Senior **BRAC** analyst Marilyn Wasleski told the commission the Pentagon didn't study the cost-effectiveness of each DFAS office and also noted that many of them were in towns hit hard in the 1993 closure round.

It isn't clear if the San Antonio office, where 318 people work, could reverse its fortunes as a result of the panel's action. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John G. Jernigan, head of a local **BRAC** task force, said the DFAS office could move to City-Base, which has buildings with room for up to 1,000 workers.

But the city faces competition from offices in South Carolina and Rome, N.Y., which are inexpensive and have capacity for growth.

The vote on **Oceana** drew some of the strongest debate of the day. Seven commissioners, including Hill, Newton and retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, voted in favor of adding **Oceana** to the list.

Neither the Navy nor the closure commission believes **Oceana** can be saved, but a suitable alternative to the base has so far proved elusive. Hill called the matter a "perplexing, complex issue" and said the commission had to study it in order to "avoid a disaster."

Citing Hill's comments, one expert close to the **BRAC** process left the hearing upbeat about Ingleside's chances of receiving a closer look from the commission. Another leader, Ingleside City Manager Mike Rhea, agreed there was hope.

"Hill did the site visit in Ingleside, and I think he came away suitably impressed by the facility and the information he was given," he said. "It's a crapshoot at this point."

Editorial/Opinion Articles

I've voted, without exception, to support Navy's positions

The Virginia Pilot
July 24, 2005

The letters that you published Friday about the current **BRAC** crisis involving Naval Air Station **Oceana**, and some comments Thursday on a local radio talk show, have prompted me to write in an attempt to clear the record.

Charges have been made in the past few days that I am not familiar with the military and that I am "in the pockets of the developers and am backing the demise of **Oceana**."

Nothing could be further from the truth. I grew up in Hampton Roads, close to the military from the beginning of my life. More than 44 years ago, I married a young Coast Guard officer who subsequently spent 32 years in active duty and reserve billets, several of which were joint billets with the Navy.

During my tenure on the Virginia Beach City Council, I have voted, without exception, to support the Navy's positions. Sometimes I have been successful, as in the case of the hotel adjacent to the convention center, which was originally proposed to be more than 30 stories; and many times unsuccessful such as with the recent "Near Post Project," a rezoning project off Laskin Road.

To paraphrase the old slogan of a major area shipyard: I always support our Navy, with a majority of the City Council if I can, on my own if I must, but I always support our Navy.

Unfortunately, I am not always in agreement with the majority on the City Council. Nor do I control my fellow members. I have to insist that I not be painted with a broad brush.

What I can pledge is that I, along with my good friends Sens. John Warner and George Allen, Gov. Mark Warner and Rep. Thelma Drake, will do all that is in our power to retain our master jet base and the wonderful people who work there, both military and civilian.

This is not only for Virginia Beach's sake but for the continued high quality of life that we offer not only for the service members but for their families as well.

Meyera E. Oberndorf
Mayor
City of Virginia Beach

Senator, Let's Launch
Richmond Times Dispatch
July 22, 2005

Naval Air Station **Oceana**, in Virginia Beach, is a key link in America's national security chain. It also is crucial to Virginia.

By a 7-1 vote, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (**BRAC**) has belatedly added **Oceana** to its list of bases to realign or close -- a list first released in May. **Oceana** failed to make the May list evidently because the Pentagon or **BRAC** wants to build a "master" tactical jet aircraft base not subject to future encroachment by civilian development.

Word out of **BRAC** suggests the commission's thinking is this: (1) Begin closing **Oceana** soon; (2) move its Navy Hornets, Super Hornets, and aging Tomcats to Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta, Georgia; and (3) build a master base at some unknown location, perhaps in North Carolina -- and keep the Navy's jets at Moody (which also faces encroachment issues) until the master base's completion.

And do all that because of some noise complaints from those living near **Oceana** in Virginia Beach.

This strikes us as close to lunacy.

Noise is a factor regarding tactical jet operations -- always has been, always will be. That said, it is worth asking how many of the noise complainants moved into their residences without knowledge of **Oceana's** proximity.

If the Pentagon or the **BRAC** commissioners want a master jet base, that's fine. Get on with buying the land and building the base; let everyone know what's going on. Keep tactical air at **Oceana** until then, and allow the Navy and Virginia Beach and everyone with any direct or collateral interest in **Oceana** qua **Oceana** to begin preparing for the phase-out.

But for Heaven's sake, do not move Navy jets from the Navy's principal fleet to an Air Force base in the middle of southern Georgia -- against the day when there may be a master jet base somewhere else.

It makes no sense -- for the nation's security, for the Navy, for Virginia Beach and all of Hampton

Roads.

If an occasion ever called for Virginia's Senator John Warner to take the lead, this is it. He wrote the **BRAC** enabling legislation. He is head of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a former Secretary of the Navy. He is one of the Senate's most distinguished members. If he cannot persuade the Pentagon or **BRAC** to remove **Oceana** from the closure list within the next month, no one can.

Senator, it's time for a BZ (Bravo Zulu -- Navy air lingo for outstanding) performance. Let's launch.

DRAFT Internal Working Document – Not for distribution under FOIA

Regional Hearing – NAS Oceana, VA

Questions

For DoD Officials:

If DoD or Navy officials testify that to open Cecil Field would be too expensive, ask the following questions?

1. Does the Navy know what the State of Florida will offer regarding land and facilities re-acquisition or the costs of relocating present commercial and industrial activities?
2. Does the Navy have an accurate estimate of the hangar, ramp and administrative and support space (by square feet) that would be needed to host all the Navy's east coast strike fighter assets and supporting aircraft, personnel and equipment?
3. Does the Navy have an accurate estimate of what facilities improvements have been made in and around Cecil?

If DoD or Navy officials testify that the airspace around Cecil Field is encroached by commercial activity, ask the following questions?

1. Is that view of encroachment shared by the FAA in the Jacksonville Area?
2. Please compare the airfield departure restrictions between Oceana and Cecil for jet departures to the offshore training areas?
 - a) What are the restrictions or course rules that Oceana aviators must use to depart from Oceana to limit noise levels?
 - b) What were the restrictions or course rules in place at Cecil Field in the late 90s?

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Brief Statement Regarding Development of the Adds List as Contained in Commission July 1, 2005 Letter

1. **MCRD San Diego, CA:** was considered at the request of a commissioner who wished to explore the redundant capacity in Marine Corps Recruiting Depots in order to relieve the congested location of the current site and to provide the local community the opportunity to expand the international airport and/or commercially develop scarce real estate.

2. **Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor, HI:** was considered at the request of commissioners who expressed concern that a shipyard with apparent higher military value and efficiency was proposed for complete closure in place of Pearl Harbor.

3. **NAS Brunswick, ME:** was presented for consideration to allow a fuller exploration of options for reducing excess infrastructure. DOD minutes show that DON had proposed for complete closure but was overruled at a late IEG meeting with the rationale of providing unspecified strategic presence and surge capability.

4. **Navy Broadway Complex, CA:** was considered at the request of a commissioner who was familiar with the installation and the development enabling legislation dating to the late 1980's. This dialogue was openly discussed during the July 19, 2005 Adds Hearing.

5a. **NAS Oceana, VA:** was included in the Chairman's letter as part of the "Realignment of Master Jet Base" consideration and was considered for addition as a potential closure at the request of commissioners who from the initial (May 17, 2005) hearings questioned the state of encroachment and alternatives for Navy. CNO testified that Navy needed to move and that several options had been considered but that no suitable alternatives had been found. Commissioners felt that another exploration of alternatives was warranted.

5b. **Moody AFB, GA:** was included in the Chairman's letter as part of the "Realignment of Master Jet Base" consideration and was generated as a result of testimony between the Commission and the CNO and the Commission and the CSAF during the May 17th, 2005 Navy and Air Force portions of Commission Hearings following receipt of the Recommendations.

6. **Galena Airport FOL, AK:** was noted as a consideration by attending commissioners as a result of dialogue during the Eielson AFB Visit on June 15, 2005 noting rather substantial operating costs with little apparent Military Value. The Commission requested Community comment regarding the consideration for such consideration in the course of open testimony at the June 15th Alaska Regional Hearing.

7. **Pope AFB, NC:** was added for consideration as a result of dialogue with commissioners regarding review by Commission staff of the Air Force BCEG minutes

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regarding last stage decisions leading to final OSD Recommendations indicating that Pope was a strong contender for full Closure up until the final decision.

8. **Grand Fork AFB, NC:** was added for consideration as a result of dialogue with commissioners regarding review by Commission staff of the Air Force BCEG minutes regarding last stage decisions leading to final OSD Recommendations indicating that Grand Forks was a strong contender for full Closure up until the final decision.

9. **Air National Guard:** This addition into the consideration listing was more a statement of concern than a consideration for addition as a result of ongoing dialogue among commissioners and staff. Additionally, it provided the Secretary of Defense an opportunity to suggest changes or additions to what was obviously a very controversial list should he choose to do so.

10. **Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Various Sites:** was added for consideration based upon information received by Commissioners from visiting the impacted DFAS installations, the Commission questioned the military value scoring system used to rank DFAS installations. The information used by the Commission to prepare analysis of this action came from several documents including: Base visit reports; Memorandum of meetings with community representatives; Information received from DoD Clearinghouse requests; Memorandum of meetings with DFAS representatives and Headquarters & Support Activities JCSG Volume VII Final BRAC 2005 Report.

11. **Professional Development Education, Various Sites:** was added for consideration as a result of an exhaustive staff study of the process by which the DoD Joint-Cross Service Education and Training committee evaluated their proposals was conducted led to the request of detailed information regarding this arena. An analysis of this information as well as dialogue with several commissioners led to the conclusion a potential add should be considered by Commissioners.

12. **Joint Medical Command Headquarters, Various Sites:** was added for consideration as a result of review and analysis of the information provided to the Commission that was used by the MJCSG to prepare analysis of a Joint Medical Command Headquarters came from: Comments received during an official Base Visit meeting regarding VA Leased Space on May 27, 2005 (attended by CODELs) and as presented by the DARPA representative; documents sourced from the DoD public reading room; responses from the OSD Clearinghouse; HSA JCSG Vol. VII Final BRAC Report 2005; and economic analysis provided by Commission staff on July 16, 2005.

Prepared Testimony To
Defense Base Closure and Realignment
Commission

United States Senator John Warner

August 4, 2005

Regional Hearing on
Master Jet Base, Naval Air Station Oceana , Virginia

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I thank you for the opportunity to provide facts for your consideration concerning the future of Naval Air Station Oceana.

Oceana is the United States Navy's Master Jet Base on the East Coast, with the primary mission of training and deploying strike-fighter squadrons. While the value of the facilities--four runways, 25 hangar modules, and other assorted infrastructure--is estimated at \$1.7 billion, Oceana's value to the Navy's Atlantic Fleet is priceless.

In making its recommendations to the Secretary of Defense for the 2005 BRAC process, the Navy assessed all factors concerning Oceana, including operational infrastructure and training, airfield characteristics, the environment and--most importantly—**encroachment**. The Navy concluded that Oceana ranks among the top 5 in military value—the highest priority criteria under the BRAC law—of all military air installations.

The military value analysis conducted by the Navy to assess encroachment issues examined incompatible land use, operational constraints, and zoning regulations. After carefully weighing these issues, the military value of Oceana—as determined by the Navy--was 65.52; higher than Beaufort (59.66), higher than Moody (28.20), higher than Whiting

(59.66), higher than Patuxent River (60.66), and higher than Naval Air Station Lemoore (61.77), the Navy's Master Jet Base on the West Coast. The military value of Oceana nearly matched that of MCAS Miramar (66.61) a West Coast Master Jet Base with encroachment concerns identified by the Department of Defense, but not singled out by the Commission for further review.

According to the Navy, NAS Oceana provides "exceptional support" to fleet carrier air wings and carrier strike groups, joint forces, and homeland defense. For 60 years, the Navy has utilized Oceana to turn naval aviators into the best strike fighter pilots in the world. Oceana shares 94,000 square miles of unencumbered and instrumented airspace with Langley Air Force Base to support joint training. The flying range ceiling reaches "all the way to the moon," with 4,560 square miles of free airspace for its Tactical Air Combat Training System, a complex network of sea-based sensors that would have to be replicated elsewhere if the Oceana-based squadrons are moved. Oceana also is close to the Dare County bombing range for inert air to ground bombing practice. And with the completion of the new Outlying Field (OLF) in North Carolina, which I am convinced will happen, training will get

even better by allowing pilots to more closely replicate the conditions of landing on an aircraft carrier.

The value of NAS Oceana's proximity to Norfolk Naval Station cannot be underestimated. This short distance allows quick surface transport of personnel and material necessary to load aboard the aircraft carriers to which the airwings are assigned, supporting the Navy's ability to surge forces forward quickly under its Fleet Response Plan. The aircraft are then launched from nearby NAS Oceana and can recover aboard the aircraft carrier as soon as it clears the Chesapeake Bay. There is no other area in the Country that offers the synergies between the fleet and the air-wings, as we have at Oceana.

Turning to the BRAC law, Section 2903(d)(2)(B) provides that the Commission may make changes to the Secretary's recommendations "*if the Commission determines that the Secretary deviated substantially*" from the criteria. In the case of Oceana there is no substantial deviation that has taken place. In fact, Oceana is a prime example of the Secretary using the most important BRAC criteria—military value—to support his recommendation submitted to the Commission on May 13, 2005.

Any decision to relocate Oceana's squadrons to a location with less military value, or to direct the Secretary of Defense to find an unidentified location with no measurable military value, would in and of itself--be a substantial deviation of the BRAC criteria. The Department of Defense spent years studying this base and all options before deciding to retain Oceana. The certified data, combined with sound military judgment, clearly proves that Oceana is critical to naval operations and that there are no viable alternatives. According to the Department's BRAC report:

ACOBRA analysis of the Naval Air Station Oceana scenarios indicated a long return on investment, with high one-time costs for possible receiving site alternatives, including one Air Force base. Evaluation of the receiving sites all identified operational issues that could impact their viability as an East Coast master jet base. Therefore, without another viable location for a Navy master jet base on the East Coast, the closure of Naval Air Station Oceana was not possible and dropped from consideration. @

This Commission has had one month to review the alternatives that the Navy has already studied and rejected. During this time, I have not been

made aware of any incorrect data used by the Navy in their military value analysis for Oceana. I have not been made aware of any incorrect COBRA cost data for scenarios involving Oceana. Maintaining Oceana does not result in a detrimental economic impact. There is no question regarding the ability of the local infrastructure to support operations at Oceana. I have not been informed of a single piece of data that could be used by the Commission to determine, that in choosing to retain Oceana, *“the Secretary deviated substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria”* as required by Section 2903(d)(2)(B) of the BRAC statute.

On the other hand, a decision by the Commission to close Oceana as a Master Jet Base would result in a substantial deviation from the BRAC selection criteria. Such a decision would mean that an air station which received one of the highest rankings in terms of military value would be closed or realigned. The cost to replace the facilities would be significant with no payback--another substantial deviation.

Encroachment and the impact on training have been stated as the reason for the Commission=s decision to consider the closure of Oceana. However, according to the Department=s certified data, which has been supported by testimony and site visits, **there are no operational restrictions**

or degradations which impair the readiness of the pilots using Oceana.

According to Rear Admiral Bullard (the officer responsible for fleet readiness training), who briefed the Commission, pilots operating out of Oceana are as qualified as any others in the United States, and have been for the last 27 years since issues of encroachment were first addressed.

I remind the Commission that neighborhoods are only one form of encroachment is not an issue unique to Oceana. The Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego is surrounded by a major metropolitan area which requires recruits to spend approximately 1/3 of their training days at another installation. Fort Bragg in North Carolina has severe restrictions on training areas resulting from the preservation of the red cockaded woodpecker. The same is true at Camp Pendleton which is required to protect the fairy shrimp, and the Goldwater range which protects the pronged antelope.

Severe airspace encroachment was a major reason for the 1995 BRAC Commission's decision to close Cecil Field in Florida and move the jets to the unfettered airspace of Oceana. How can this Commission be seriously considering reversing a decision of the last BRAC round and returning these planes to Cecil Field? NAS Oceana has not had to restrict flying operations to curtail the take-off of combat loaded aircraft to one end of the runway like

other air bases with more severe encroachment problems. Given that the Commission has taken an interest in the issue of encroachment, I have to question why the Commission did not consider other air bases for further review, given their more severe encroachment problems.

Most military installations in the United States suffer from encroachment of one form or another. That is an unfortunate fact of life. The local communities supporting NAS Oceana have been proactively and aggressively cooperating with the Navy for years to address issues related to the encroachment of local development. A Joint Use Land Study was recently completed for NAS Oceana by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in cooperation with numerous local communities. As a result, local communities enthusiastically adopted a long-term plan to manage the growth of surrounding development while allowing certain types of construction and maintaining safe decibel levels for residential areas. As both the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and the Deputy Secretary of Defense have statedC the encroachment at Oceana is manageable.

The Department of Defense has suggested that if the Navy had a “clean sheet” it would build a new master jet base in a new location on the

East Coast for the jets of the future. I have been working with the military for over 60 years and I can tell you that if the Department had a “clean sheet” for every base currently facing encroachment problems our military base structure throughout the country would look very different from what it is today. But that is not the reality with which we are confronted. We simply do not have the room, resources, or luxury in this country to start from scratch. We have vital acquisition and readiness requirements—requirements critical to protect our national security interests--that are competing for precious taxpayer dollars. Given the facts before us, how could we explain to the American taxpayer a decision to build a new master jet base at a cost that is undeterminable, rather than retain Oceana and its \$1.7 billion worth of infrastructure.

Before we decide to spend the billion plus dollars that a new base would cost, we must ask the critical questions.

- 1) Has encroachment resulted in operational restrictions which have degraded the training of our pilots? and
- 2) Is there a location that would better serve the military at a reasonable cost?

The answer to both of these questions as it applies to Oceana— according to the Department's own data--is an unequivocal NO.

The Secretary of Defense decided that Oceana's combination of close proximity to the fleet, access to superb training ranges, and an encroachment problem that is manageable, was the right answer for an east coast master jet base. Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I urge you to adhere to the BRAC criteria and to support the Secretary's decision.

**SENATOR GEORGE ALLEN'S TESTIMONY BEFORE
THE BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE (BRAC) COMMISSION
AUGUST 4, 2005**

Chairman Principi and Members of the Commission:

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to once again testify before this Commission. The last time I appeared before you on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia we were discussing the Secretary's recommendations for base closures and realignments for a number of Virginia installations. However, today, we are discussing, Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, a base that this Commission added to the list for consideration for closure and realignment.

I understand the need to thoroughly examine each military facility and evaluate its proper place, if any, in the future of our national military strategy. However, after the testimony some of you heard on site at Oceana - that Oceana has a high military value; that it serves the Navy very well; that the challenges regarding sustainment of operations are manageable; that moving the Navy jets would be harmful to our military and costly to our taxpayers; and that Oceana is the best option on the East Coast for the Navy's Master Jet Base - I trust you will conclude, as the Navy and the Secretary of Defense has, that Oceana remains the best location on the East Coast for the Navy's Master Jet Base and that the common encroachment issue has not negatively impacted the base, its pilots, or its mission.

For those of you who were unable to attend the site visit I would like to re-cap for you the factual findings of the meeting and the testimony your colleagues and I heard directly from those who operate Oceana and those who train there. I found the testimony of everyone from Admiral Turcotte, Commander of the Navy for the Mid-Atlantic Region to the jet fighter pilots to be candid, credible and informative.

NAS Oceana has a tradition of excellence that, for the past 65 years has provided exceptional support to Fleet Carrier Air Wings and Carrier Strike Groups; our joint forces; and our homeland defense and interagency operations. Currently Oceana serves as the East Coast's Master Jet Base and all training for the Atlantic Fleet's air arm goes through Oceana. Oceana's 12,000 military and civilian employees help to serve the more than 250 aircrafts that are a part of 16 fleet squadrons. In fact, Oceana is Virginia Beach's largest employer, which provides a \$1.5 billion annual economic impact to the region.

As we heard at the Oceana site visit on August 1, 2005, from Admiral Turcotte, pilots go through hours and hours of training either in the many F-18s or in the best training equipment in the world, which consists of flight simulators and other state of the art equipment. In fact, pilots spend almost as much time in flight simulators as they do in the air. On flight simulators, pilots fight air battles, fly bombing runs over enemy territory, and practice landing on carriers during the night. The continual repetition of these activities has led to a more lethal Navy as well as a safer Navy, with fewer accidents. Last year, the Navy had the sixth best year when it came to the least amount of accidents. Currently, the Navy is on course to have the fifth safest year in their history. There is an attention to detail that is unmatched and until these pilots meet their requirements, they cannot go into mission.

One of the many positive attributes that Oceana has is its access to unfettered airspace. The Tactical Air Combat Training System (TACTS) Range, which is 30 miles southeast of Oceana, is 4,560 square miles of open airspace which is under the complete control of the military. The TACTS Range provides a unique opportunity for pilots to train against each other. In addition, Admiral Gehman touched upon the fact that the TACTS Range is also utilized by Langley Air Force Base and the importance of this is that the pilots from Oceana can train against dissimilar planes out of Langley. Therefore, pilots do not become too accustomed to training against the same planes day in and day out. I couldn't agree more with Admiral Gehman when he stated that this is precious territory. And, I might add, that should the Commission realign or close Oceana, it would be very difficult and expensive to duplicate this airspace anywhere else.

Mr. Chairman, this is only one of the many reasons why Oceana has a high military value score. In fact, Oceana's military value is so high that according to the Navy, Oceana ranks 5th out of 60 for Non-DON Aviation Bases. That ranking includes a downgrade for encroachment as well. While the BRAC analysis of Oceana puts it 6th out 34, the bottom line is that no matter who does the scoring, Oceana has a very high military value score and should not be thrown to the curb.

Another reason why Oceana has such a high military value is its co-location with the Norfolk fleet. The closeness in proximity to the fleet provides a unique synergy that enhances military readiness and gives Oceana a significant advantage above other master jet bases. When the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Robert Willard testified before you on July 18, 2005, he asserted – that the co-location to the Norfolk fleet provides a significant advantage.

Now I know that some individuals are concerned that the encroachment issue at Oceana hinders the training and readiness of the pilots. They argue that since the pilots have to come in at a higher altitude than what they would normally come in at to a carrier, because of the noise restrictions, that this somehow causes a major disruption to training. But as we heard at the site visit, these turns, differences in altitude, and altered routes are no different than what the pilots were facing back in 1979 and therefore do not impede mission. Again, Admiral Willard clearly articulated this point before the Commission when he stated, "I would like to assert that from the Navy's vantage point, we believe that Oceana continues to serve the fleet well, that challenges you mentioned regarding encroachment in Oceana have been and are manageable." Admiral Willard does not just hold this opinion, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Gordon England, has also stated that the encroachment at Oceana is manageable. I would also like to note that the Navy said when the new OLF is completed; it will provide a more accurate scenario for pilots flying into a carrier, therefore only enhancing mission effectiveness and safety.

Unfortunately, for some residents, noise is still a problem. However, I do know that for the overwhelming majority of the residents of Virginia Beach every time a jet flies over the remark is, "that's the sound of freedom!" I have heard from thousands of constituents who support keeping Oceana open. I have also received petitions from these men and women and I would like to submit them for the record. These men and women truly appreciate the importance of Oceana and they recognize that every time a jet flies over, freedom and liberty are being advanced.

Mr. Chairman, as I have pointed out, a significant realignment of Oceana will have detrimental effects on our military, but it will also have an effect on our taxpayers. As a United States Senator, I take great pride in being a good steward of the taxpayer dollar – the people of Virginia have entrusted me with this responsibility to use the money as wisely and as effectively as possible. It is no secret that the Navy is contemplating a new master jet base. I would hardly call an investment right now into a new jet base a good use of taxpayers' dollars when Oceana has shown to be 95 percent just as effective as any new base. Moreover, why would we want to "temporarily" move the jets from Oceana to another base – invest hundreds of millions of dollars into these bases so that they can house the jets and then turnaround and spend, which is likely to be over a billion and half dollars to build a new master jet base? This is, in my opinion, not a good use of taxpayer money. The bottom line is that the Navy concluded that even with a \$500 million investment in another existing base, NAS Oceana continues to be the best option for a master jet base on the East Coast.

But what I also found intriguing is that the Navy ran scenarios for every aviation base, taking into account all branches of the military, on the East Coast, and none of them, not one, met the needs of a master jet base or could provide the positive attributes that Oceana presently provides. So if there is no possible location, currently, for a new master jet base, why try and realign the best one on the East Coast? Again, that doesn't make sense militarily and nor for scarce taxpayer dollars.

Furthermore, Admiral Willard testified that dividing a wing from a master jet base could impact mission. He states:

And in dividing a wing from a master jet base, which after all has its own synergy involved, the various type/model/series of aircraft that are together at a master jet base are part of a carrier air wing; they themselves across the communities of those aircraft have to train and be able to fight together much as our joint services do. So dividing up those type/model/series to disparate locations takes away from that synergy that is inherent in the air wing itself, notwithstanding the lack of savings that's associated with that by dividing and now establishing two locations where training operations, maintenance and all of the associated overhead would have to take place.

So from the standpoint of dividing the type/model/series apart at a master jet base like Oceana, from the vantage of a naval aviator or naval leadership, [this proposal is] not desirable either from [a naval aviator or naval leadership] operational standpoint or from a monetary standpoint.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, Virginia Beach, the Commonwealth of Virginia and its Congressional Delegation are prepared to work with you, the Navy, and the Department of Defense so that we can provide the best military value for our nation's defense. When you closely analyze the evidence it will be clear beyond any doubt that Oceana has the best attributes for our Navy and our nation's defense and also, the best fiscal option for U.S. taxpayers. I am confident that you will uphold the DoD's and the Navy's decision to keep Oceana open and serving our naval aviation training and operation. Thank you for your vitally important service to our country.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

August 4, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Sixth Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Navy's air operations at Naval Air Station Oceana and has since it was first established as an "auxiliary airfield" to the Norfolk Naval Complex.

NAS Oceana comprises several installations/activities: the "Main Base"; the Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (NALF) Fentress; Dam Neck-Combat Direction Systems and Fleet Combat Training Center; and Chambers Field at Naval Station Norfolk. The installation has high Military Value -- ranking 6th out of 36 Naval and Marine Corps air stations in BRAC 2005 analysis -- and inherent strength from its training missions, proximity to the Norfolk Naval Station as well as other military installations of the Hampton Roads region, and its high plant replacement value of over \$1.7 billion.

As I previously testified at the Commission's July 7, 2005 hearing for Virginia's military installations and further detailed in written testimony submitted to the Commission prior to this hearing, the Navy's East Coast Master Jet Base is well situated in the South Hampton Roads area. The City of Virginia Beach -- and its residents -- overwhelmingly fully support NAS Oceana and its mission.

NAS Oceana provides exceptional support to Fleet Carrier Air Wings and Carrier Strike Groups, Joint Forces and the nation's Homeland Defense and Interagency Operations.

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The region surrounding NAS Oceana is blanketed with high-quality training venues. Military air crew training requires dedicated and specialized airspace to remain combat-ready, and the Military Training Routes, Restricted Areas, Military Operating Areas, Warning Areas and other Special Use Airspace available over the area and just off the mid-Atlantic Coast support the full spectrum of training requirements for naval aviators.

As Rear Admiral Steve Turcotte, Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, pointed out during the Commissioners' visit to NAS Oceana on August 1, 2005, NAS Oceana offers "unfettered access" to air space for training. This access to airspace is only found in the Mid-Atlantic region of the East Coast. Unlimited height and width for training naval aviators off the Virginia Capes affords the opportunity for multiple engagements in airspace under total military control. Additionally, the ability to train in the air and on the ground in a "joint environment" within the region is an important attribute of the installation, and jointness is a Department of Defense emphasis item for the BRAC 2005 round.

The Commission's decision on July 19, 2005, to consider the closure of NAS Oceana was disappointing, puzzling and given the facts on its the military value and the past year's collaborative effort between the local government and the Navy in crafting a Joint Land Use Study which has been adopted by all relevant parties. A perplexing aspect of this decision is the fact that the Navy did not consider closing a Naval Air facility until reaching those (NAS Willow Grove and NAS Atlanta) with a Military Value ranking of 31 and 34 out of 36. NAS Oceana's high military value is clearly the fundamental reason the Navy did not recommend closure or significant realignment of the installation.

In the Military Value ranking for NAS Oceana with other Naval Aviation Operation installations, the Navy used different "weights" -- the BRAC Selection Criteria 1 to 4 -- to reflect the relative importance of the 73 questions and attributes considered in evaluating installation Military Value. Grading the questions and attributes associated with encroachment -- both of NAS Oceana and its Outlying Landing Field (OLF), NALF Fentress -- resulted in a total of approximately 5 of 12.75 points of the 100 possible. The low relative point total for encroachment in the Navy's Military Value ranking demonstrates that encroachment was not the important issue for Navy aviation installations, and was of considerably lesser importance than other considerations.

Furthermore, NAS Oceana is clearly one of the Navy's top Aviation Operations Installations as ranked and scored by the weighting given to "Operational Infrastructure

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and Training.” NAS Oceana ranked 1 and 8 respectively on these two key areas for the 36 installations ranked.

At the Commission’s hearing on July 19, 2005, in Washington, D.C., BRAC Commission Senior Analyst Bill Fetzer stated, “*The primary reason to consider NAS Oceana for closure is the increasing encroachment of the surrounding community. Despite significant efforts by the Navy and local community leaders over the last 30 years to limit encroachment, developers demands and property rights issues have trumped the Navy’s objections to new building in the high noise and accident potential zones, also known as APZs.*” It is clear that the Navy made its considerations and decision not to recommend a significant realignment or closure of NAS Oceana during its deliberations with full consideration and knowledge of the NAS Oceana environment.

All military aviation installations work with some degree of mission encroachment. Some, such as Luke Air Force Base, AZ, Travis AFB, CA, Nellis AFB, NV, and McGuire AFB, NJ, have similar, if not more significant encroachment issues than NAS Oceana. However, the Commission did not add these other military installations for consideration of closure or realignment based on encroachment. The legitimacy of the decision to add NAS Oceana for consideration of significant realignment or closure appears to violate the principle of equal consideration of all installations.

Specifically, Section 2903(B) of the Base Closure Act specifies Commission authority to consider the Secretary’s recommendations: “*(B) Subject to subparagraph (C), in making its recommendations, the Commission may make changes in any of the recommendations made by the Secretary if the Commission determines that the Secretary deviated substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria referred to in subsection (c)(1) in making recommendations. (C) In the case of a change described in subparagraph (D) in the recommendations made by the Secretary, the Commission may make the change only if the Commission – (i) makes the determination required by subparagraph (B); (ii) determines that the change is consistent with the force-structure plan and final criteria referred to in subsection (c)(1); ... (D) Subparagraph (C) shall apply to a change by the Commission in the Secretary’s recommendations that would – (i) add a military installation to the list of military installations recommended by the Secretary for closure; (ii) add a military installation to the list of military installations recommended by the Secretary for realignment; or (iii) increase the extent of a realignment of a particular military installation recommended by the Secretary. ...*”

A careful examination of the BRAC Commission discussions and its staff presentation on NAS Oceana reveals no potential determination that the Navy

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“substantially deviated” from the selection criteria or the force-structure plan. In fact, it is highly improbable that the Navy could deviate from the selection criteria, or the force structure plan, in an action it did not recommend. There are no substantive recommendations for realignment of any of the Navy’s Master Jet Bases on either the East Coast or the West Coast that warrant a “substantial deviation” discussion.

From the foregoing discussion points, it appears that the conclusion that the Commission reached in voting to add NAS Oceana as a potential closure or realignment is that the Navy did not fully consider the BRAC Military Value selection criteria as they apply to NAS Oceana and to all other Navy aviation installations. If this were the case, it would seem that many more aviation installations could have also been added to the Commission’s list for consideration of closure or realignment.

Of further concern upon review of the BRAC Commission deliberations and its staff presentations regarding NAS Oceana is the omission of consideration of the Navy’s testimony on July 18, 2005 on the high value of NAS Oceana for the Navy’s critical training missions. Admiral Robert Willard, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, testified that the training operations at NAS Oceana “continue to serve the fleet well” and without compromise. Nor was there any consideration given an extensive Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) recently completed by the cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Chesapeake in full coordination with the Navy and the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment, that resulted in an unprecedented cooperative arrangement designed to fulfill both the Navy’s needs for effective operation of its Master Jet Base and the surrounding communities’ economic development.

The details of this latest effort in the long-standing commitment of the City of Virginia Beach and other communities to work with the Navy to address encroachment and other concerns are critical to any assessment of NAS Oceana and its value as a Master Jet Base. The full details of the JLUS report and its impact on NAS Oceana were presented to Commission staff in a meeting on July 14, 2005. Further, the JLUS findings were included in the written testimony submitted to the Commission in advance of its July 7, 2005, hearing on Virginia’s military installations. Careful consideration of the JLUS report and its results will prove that concerns about recent economic growth around NAS Oceana and encroachment are manageable while balancing major stakeholder interests.

The encroachment issue has arisen recently not as the result of new growth around NAS Oceana, but in large part, as the result of a Navy regulatory change in 2002. The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) instruction expanded the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) to deem the residences of 92,162 people

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living within the 65 to 74 decibel noise level to be “incompatible and encroaching on NAS Oceana.” This administrative adjustment occurred without state or local input.

In an effort to address the Navy’s concern and its regulatory adjustment, the local jurisdictions acted to identify how expected growth can occur without jeopardizing the military mission. The JLUS study was endorsed by all communities involved and prompted the creation of a permanent regional committee to address ongoing concerns about jet noise and other issues that affect residents and local military bases.

Cited by participants as one of the most positive steps ever taken in the region to build partnerships between military leaders and local communities, the study includes proposals to amend Virginia Beach’s Comprehensive Plan and outlines the creation of a new zoning overlay district aligned with the Navy’s noise and Accident Potential Zones (APZ).

A key result of this proposal is that Virginia Beach has agreed to retain agricultural zoning of one residential lot per 15 acres in the inter-facility zone between NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress at or above 75 dB Day and Night Level (DNL) and amend the Comprehensive Plan to retain agricultural zoning with residential density not to exceed one dwelling per five acres in the 70 to 75 dB DNL noise zone. Virginia Beach agreed to limit density to one dwelling per acre in the 65-70 dB DNL noise zone, and also agreed to consider ways to substantially reduce the number of residential units allowed by current zoning in the Resort Area.

Other JLUS findings also adopted by the Virginia Beach City Council include provisions that the City will:

- Create a new process for Navy officials to review and comment earlier in the process on proposed development in the AICUZ;
- Ask sponsors proposing development that might be incompatible with the Navy’s AICUZ guidelines to meet with Navy officials to discuss alternatives;
- Initiate a working group with NAS Oceana and the Virginia Real Estate Board to review and possibly revise all disclosures currently in use for noise and/or accident potential zones and determine where disclosures might be needed where none are used now;
- Keep the Navy effectively involved in future planning processes for proposed transportation improvements in the AICUZ;
- Continue to include the Navy as a vital stakeholder in revising the Oceanfront Resort Area Concept Plan; and

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- Strengthen its working relationship with the Navy and create an ongoing, open dialogue to address the Navy's concerns about potential encroachment at NAS Oceana.

The overall JLUS agreement assigns implementation responsibilities to all parties for each step in the process. In addition, I have directed relevant state agencies to prepare guidance packages for military installations that clearly describe zoning and planning appeals processes under Virginia law.

Furthermore, based on legislation recently passed by the Virginia General Assembly, sound attenuation laws will be expanded to certain non-residential uses, and disclosures of noise and/or APZs will be improved for the sale or lease of residential units. In 1995, Virginia Beach obtained authority from the Virginia General Assembly to create an Airport Zoning Ordinance that allows the City to better plan for development around NAS Oceana and to require noise attenuation where appropriate.

U.S. Census data reveals that in the mission-critical 5,389 acre-inter-facility zone between NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress, population *decreased* between 1990 and 2000. Indications are that it continues to follow this pattern. Additionally, NAS Oceana projections for force structure call for a 35 percent reduction in aircraft, from 316 in 2001 to 204 in 2010, as the Navy retires its F-14 jets and cuts its F/A-18c inventory by almost half. Fewer aircraft and fewer flights positively address concerns expressed by Commission members about increasingly compromised safety conditions for flights in and out of NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress and the surrounding APZs. Currently, the Naval Aircraft Safety record is the 6th best rate in the history of Naval Aviation, and at the current rate, indications are that FY 05 will conclude with the 5th best rate in the history of Naval Aviation.

When compared to other military air training environments, NAS Oceana offers safe, optimal training for its pilots, according to Rear Admiral Donald K. Bullard, the Navy's Director of Readiness and Training. His assessment of training at NAS Oceana during the Commissioners' visit was supported by that of Captain McCandlish, Commander of the Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic, who reported that both younger pilots and veteran pilots meet all the training requirements at NAS Oceana.

As Admiral Turcotte stated during a presentation to the Commissioners at NAS Oceana, "The war fighter is receiving the training required at NAS Oceana. In recent conflicts and in the ongoing war on terror, NAS Oceana aircrews have successfully achieved the mission by putting bombs on target, on time."

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During its BRAC 2005 deliberations, the Navy considered several alternatives to its Master Jet Base at NAS Oceana. As outlined in the July 14, 2005, Department of Defense response to BRAC Commission queries, the Navy investigated these alternatives “out of concern over likely long-term encroachment issues.” However, fruitful efforts by the localities to address these concerns, as well as other findings from its investigation, certainly led the Navy to decide that NAS Oceana should retain its mission as a Master Jet Base. As Admiral Robert Willard, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, testified at the Commission’s hearing on July 18, 2005, “Moody was among several considered alternatives. You mentioned a few: Oceana, Moody, Shaw, Seymour Johnson, Tyndall, Patrick. And I would tell you that the deliberations occurred into the executive committee portions of our deliberations for BRAC before the final report was submitted, so – a lot of consideration and a lot of discussion with the Air Force. With regard to Moody in particular, the cost is significant. Moody is a World War II vintage air base; about a half a billion dollars of military construction would be required there. But more than that, in deliberations with the Air Force, it was decided that the Air Force had a need for Moody. And as we have stated, sharing Moody with the Air Force with the inability to bring the entire wing from Oceana – there is not a cost effective alternative. So a lot of view into potential alternatives – and frankly, **Oceana continues to be the Navy’s best option for its Master Jet Base on the East Coast.**”

The City of Virginia Beach has invested many millions of dollars to accommodate the Navy’s needs at NAS Oceana, for example investment of \$202 million in transportation improvements during the last decade. These improvements include Dam Neck Road, the intersection of London Bridge Road and Great Neck Road, Oceana Boulevard, and the currently approved Birdneck Road project. The southeastern Parkway and Greenbelt (SEPG) will hopefully be constructed within the next eight years that will provide interstate access from NAS Oceana to I-64 in Chesapeake, similar to its existing, excellent access to I-264.

The City of Virginia Beach has also invested in other community improvements including relocating schools at the request of previous BRAC rounds, providing a world-class education system and a quality living environment for the service men and women and their families who enjoy tremendous job opportunities for spousal and family employment, higher education opportunities, a tremendous support network for military families with special needs children, miles of beaches, public parks and other attributes too numerous to mention. Service men and women and their families love Virginia Beach and love being stationed at the installation.

Of particular importance to any decision regarding NAS Oceana is the National Command Authority activity supported by the installation. The support of those

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operators has historically been given a high priority and must receive a high priority in any discussion you have on the future of NAS Oceana.

In conclusion, the Commission must deal with the facts provided by all concerned parties. Those facts support the conclusion that NAS Oceana remains the best option for the Navy's East Coast Master Jet Base now and into the foreseeable future. Legitimate concerns expressed throughout our collective discourse will not be ignored as we move forward. Indeed, our discussions have already produced new ideas that will benefit both DoD and the host community of Virginia Beach. The state will continue to lead the charge to finding long-term solutions benefiting NAS Oceana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark R. Warner

MRW/vdh

Enclosure

-- you know, all things being equal, we'd like to be in that area. And I wonder -- just your thoughts on how -- I think, in the best interests of the Navy -- and, by the way, other services have similar bias, so I'm not -- you know, perceived bias -- and I'm not saying you're the only one, you're the only one here this afternoon. So, I wonder what your -- you do to make sure that -- the informed decisions that you do make, that you overcome it, and what you do to prepare the public, or to educate the public, that these decisions and recommendations really are fact-based and not, kind of, a built-in inclination towards the Southeast.

Secretary England: Mr. Skinner, first of all, I mean, we have the hand that's been dealt to us. I mean, we're not building any bases. The bases are where they are. And our objective is to get maximum military value and biggest savings to the taxpayer.

Now, the reason I wanted Ms. Davis to go through this rationale is so that it's very clear that this is a -- we started this at the very bottom with data calls. I mean, there's literally, for the Department of the Navy, 3.8 million data bits. And this data was worked extensively, and worked through the pyramid, as she indicated to you, to the top, in terms of recommendations to the leadership. So, this is a bottoms-up process. I mean, this is strictly fact-based. If you could eliminate names from all this and

just give 'em colors or letters or whatever, and you would have ended up with the same recommendations.

Now, when you get the data, I believe you will see that this is a highly analytical, objective process. I mean, frankly, the process doesn't know where the bases are. It's strictly an analysis of capability, military value, cost, et cetera. So, I think you will find this to be very fact-based and very objective, and it has absolutely no bearing at all on where anything's located. And I'm sure the data will support that when you have an opportunity to look at it in detail.

Mr. Skinner: It does. I mean, it is. Because, as you point out, you're mainly feeding bases that are already established, that you've basically inherited. So, whatever's built in is built in. I --

Secretary England: And the cost --

Mr. Skinner: And that gets me to my final point, and one that dealt with -- and I think -- I'm not sure we got the answer. We'll give you a chance to complete your answer, let's put it that way.

Oceana, where it could be moved. If we had joint facilities or if we had facilities that -- you know, that -- this Commission, as you know, albeit -- it would be done only with a great deal of thought -- it does have the -- to make recommendations that go beyond individual and can take

Secretary England: Mr. Skinner, let me just say this.

First of all, our first criteria was military value, so it had to make sense from a military-value point of view. That said, we did want to end up, you know, saving money, because that's an important resource for the Department of the Navy. But it was military value. And, in this case, it is difficult in New London, but it's also \$1.75 billion.

Now, we are not allowed to consider all the input from the community, frankly. We consider certified data, and our decision is based on that. Now, you can look broader than that, you know, with community input. But it was a military-value decision for us. It was a very large savings. And, in our judgment, it was the right decision for us to make, because it was infrastructure that we did not need for our future Navy. So, we did not need the infrastructure. It did save resources, and it did have a high military value. So, you know, in our judgment, that was the right decision to make.

Mr. Skinner: Well, in order for us to evaluate that, we need to see the analysis of what the costs of the other movements would be, as well as the impact that those other movements would have on the community.

Secretary England: And that's -- that will all be available, and we'll go through that with you and your staff in great detail, Mr. Skinner.

Mr. Skinner: Yeah. Also, you talked about the disadvantage of splitting, but if you look through your estimates and your recommendations, you've done a lot of splitting here. You've closed facilities and split of 'em, and so have the others. So, splitting isn't all bad. And I was -- I think just the fact that you have to split doesn't, sometimes, cost you more money. Sometimes it doesn't, depending on what you have to build out and what you don't.

So, splitting -- I don't want to leave the negative connotation, because you've got it in a lot of your other recommendations, which I'm sure we'll look seriously at.

Another issue that I'd like to talk about, and I say this as a former Cabinet Secretary and a former Secretary of the Coast Guard, de facto. There does seem to be -- as I traveled the country then, as I travel the country now -- there does seem to be a feeling throughout this country that there's a bias by the Navy towards the Southeast, from Virginia on down south. Now, I don't say that it's a bias that plays a role every day, but if you look at -- on the West Coast or the East Coast -- you look on the East Coast, General Hagee, most of your facilities are down in that area -- obviously, Norfolk, and we've seen what's happened -- Norfolk, Georgia, Florida. You understand, of course -- and I'm not accusing anybody at this table of having any perceived -- well, there is a perceived bias that there's a

PUBLIC HEARING
PRESENTATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND METHODOLOGY
NAVY
DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION (BRAC)
Tuesday, May 17, 2005
1:28 p.m.
Hart Senate Office Building, Room SH-216
Washington, D.C.

A T T E N D A N C E

COMMISSIONERS:

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
The Honorable James H. Bilbray
The Honorable Philip E. Coyle III
Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr., USN (Ret.)
The Honorable James V. Hansen
General James T. Hill, USA (Ret.)
General Lloyd W. Newton, USAF (Ret.)
The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner
Brigadier General Sue Ellen Turner, USAF (Ret.)
Charles Battaglia, Executive Director

WITNESSES:

The Honorable Gordon R. England, Secretary of the Navy
Admiral Vern Clark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations
General Michael W. Hagee, USMC, Commandant of the Marine
Corps
Ms. Anne Rathmell Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the
Navy for Infrastructure Strategy & Analysis

OPENING STATEMENT OF ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI, CHAIRMAN, DEFENSE
BASE CLOSURE & REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

Chairman Principi: Good afternoon. We're a few minutes early, but we seem to be ready to go, and we might as well get on with it.

And I am certainly pleased to welcome the Navy/Marine Corps team, the Honorable Gordon England, Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Vern Clark, our Chief of Naval Operations, General Michael Hagee, Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. They're joined by Anne Rathmell Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Infrastructure Strategy and Analysis, who is prepared to comment on the methodology employed by the Navy and the Marine Corps in arriving at the recommended list.

As I have noted in my public remarks, the Congress entrusts our Armed Forces with vast, but not unlimited, resources. Every dollar consumed in redundant, unnecessary, obsolete, inappropriately designed or located infrastructure is a dollar not available to provide the training or research that could ensure continued dominance of the sea, air, and land, the battlespace, if you will, in which our servicemembers fight.

Today's hearing will help shed more light on the Navy and Marine Corps recommendations for restructuring our nation's defense installations and harnessing this process

to advance long-term transformation goals.

In support of that objective, we will hear testimony today from the Department of the Navy's leadership, the decision-makers. I know that the Navy and Marine Corps have poured an enormous amount of time, energy, and brain power into the final product that is the subject of our hearing. It is only logical and proper that the witnesses be afforded the opportunity to explain to the American public and to our independent Commission what they propose to do to the Navy and the Marine Corps infrastructure that supports our joint military operations.

As I have previously stated publicly, this Commission takes its responsibility very seriously to provide an objective and independent analysis of these recommendations, and we will carefully study each Navy, Marine Corps, and Department of Defense recommendation in a transparent manner, steadily seeking input from affected communities to make sure they fully meet the congressionally mandated selection criteria. Those recommendations that substantially deviate from the criteria, we will either modify or reject, as the facts and circumstances may warrant.

I now request our witnesses to stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment Statute. The oath will be administered by Mr.

Dan Cowhig.

[Whereupon, the witnesses were sworn.]

Chairman Principi: Again, welcome, Mr. Secretary. You may proceed.

TESTIMONY OF HON. GORGON R. ENGLAND, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY;
ACCOMPANIED BY ADMIRAL VERN CLARK, USN, CHIEF OF NAVAL
OPERATIONS; GENERAL MICHAEL W. HAGEE, USMC, COMMANDANT
OF THE MARINE CORPS; MS. ANNE RATHMELL DAVIS, DEPUTY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

Secretary England: Mr. Chairman, thanks for very much, and members of the committee.

First, I want to thank everyone for the opportunity for the leadership team of the Department of the Navy to be here today to provide for you an overview of our recommendations for closure and alignment.

Let me say that -- first of all, let me assure you that the Department of the Navy will fully cooperate with you and your staffs in making available all of our information, all of our rationale. Our people are available, at your disposal, so that you understand the basis for our recommendations. We do appreciate your important role in this process. You will find us fully responsive to your needs. We'll do that in a very timely manner. And we do appreciate your service on the Commission, because this is

an important and difficult task, and we appreciate your service.

I do have a written statement, Mr. Chairman, I've submitted. If you've had a chance to look at it, you will find that it was written as a summary, but also as a roadmap, frankly, to help the Commission, in terms of understanding our report. So, it is a summary document. If you haven't read it, you may find it useful, just as a summary of the report, and as a roadmap of the report. So, that's why it was prepared, to hopefully help you in that regard.

Now, as you are likely aware, the BRAC 2005 analysis was divided into two parallel paths. The first was that the Department of the Navy analyzed Navy and Marine Corps unique functions -- that is, the operational support internal to the Department and those activities that were not analyzed by the joint cross-service groups -- and our presentation and discussion today will focus primarily on the Department of the Navy unique aspects. Then the second parallel path is the joint cross-service groups. They analyzed Navy and Marine Corps functions as they relate to similar functions across DOD. And our Department personnel -- that is, Department of the Navy personnel, both civilian and military -- participate as working members of each of the joint cross-service groups.

Now, the Department of the Navy follows several key principles for analyzing the Navy and Marine Corps unique functions. And, specifically, this is what we sought to do:

First, assess military value, including jointness.

Two, eliminate unneeded capacity by consolidating infrastructure.

Three, increasing force-protection effectiveness and reducing costs through consolidation.

Four, to achieve net-positive cost savings as early as possible for each recommendation.

If I can just summarize a little bit for you, our net-positive cost savings are achieved for most closures within four years; 31 pay off immediately, 13 pay off within four years -- so basically 43 pay off within four years -- and then nine have longer payoffs. So, we have a total of 53 recommendations that cover 63 bases, with most of those having a positive payoff within four years.

Fifth, we wanted to accommodate future operational concepts and the 20-year force projection.

Sixth, provide sufficient capability for surge requirements.

And, lastly, improve our business processes.

Now, based on these ground rules and our analysis, the Department of the Navy is recommending nine major closures, 46 smaller closures, and eight realignments. Now, there are

additional realignments proposed by the joint cross-service groups that affect the Navy and the Marine Corps, and these are addressed in the joint cross-service group reports, rather than in the Department of the Navy report. So, Department of the Navy, joint cross-service, and they're two separate reports. I believe you understand that, but we can discuss it as we go on today for further clarification.

As I look at the infrastructure footprint that will result from all of these recommendations, I am confident that it is more than sufficient to fully support the future Navy and Marine Corps force structure. Now, the 20-year net-present value of the Department of the Navy recommended actions is \$8.4 billion, with steady-state savings of \$817 million. And, again, the joint cross-service groups recommendations and savings are in addition to these numbers.

I also want to mention, as members of the Infrastructure Executive Council, the CNO, the Commandant, and myself had the opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations of the joint cross-service groups, and the three of us fully support the recommendations and the findings of those groups. And, again, as noted, our discussion today will primarily be on unique requirements, but I want you to know that we fully support the other recommendations that were made by the joint cross-service

groups. And those recommendations, by the joint cross-service groups, will be presented to you in the next two days.

Now, Ms. Anne Davis, to my right, is the Special Assistant for the Department's BRAC 2005 process. She reported directly to me, as Secretary of the Navy. She was my direct-report, and she basically managed this entire process. And she will be providing four you a summary of our recommendations and also the detailed methodology that we used to develop those recommendations. She'll discuss the details, including our bottom-up process of developing the data and analysis that served as the basis of our decisions. I will emphasize, this is a totally bottom-up process based on data analysis and specific data that we asked for from all of our facilities. And she will discuss that with you in detail so you understand the mechanism and the methodology that we ultimately arrived at recommendations that then resulted in decisions by myself, the CNO, and the Commandant.

I do want to comment that this has been a very difficult process for the Department, as all of our bases are located in communities across America, where our men and women in uniform, and their families, are highly regarded, and where those employees have accomplished valuable and important work for America. All of our communities have

welcomed our presence. We do tend to provide a very positive economic impact in those communities. Importantly, the other side of that coin is that we depend on communities to support our military. We have been, and are, most appreciative of the support; however the world we live in, our nation, and our Navy have undergone significant change, and it's important that we adapt our infrastructure to meet this new environment.

I know this does not lessen distress for any of our valued communities that have been bases recommended for closure, but I do want them to know that their dedication to the Navy and to America is appreciated. We do ask that all the communities affected by BRAC, whether gaining or losing sailors, marines, or Department of Navy civilians, work closely with us as we work with them to adjust to these major strategic changes in the world.

So, I thank you for the opportunity just for making a few summary comments. I would now like to turn it over to Ms. Anne Davis, who will proceed with a discussion of our methodology, a summary of our recommendations. And then the four of us would be very pleased to engage in a dialogue and answer any of your questions.

Anne?

[The prepared statement of Secretary England follows:]

Ms. Davis: Thank you, sir.

Chairman Principi, members of the Commission, it's an honor to be here today.

As the Secretary noted, I am, was throughout this process, his Special Assistant for Base Closure. I had a number of roles. I was the director of the infrastructure analysis team that supported the entirety of the effort. I chaired the Department of the Navy analysis group, which did the Navy unique -- Department of the Navy unique analysis; as well as, with Vice Chief of Naval Operations and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, the co-chair of the infrastructure evaluation group; and members of the infrastructure steering group. So, my role in the process spans, really, the entirety of the process.

What I will be providing is an overview of the process and methodology. We have, I believe, provided to you slides so that you can follow along and take any notes on those.

Our recommendations are the result of a rigorous analytical process that built upon data collected from each Department of the Navy activity. And we believe that, as a result of that data source and, as the Secretary noted, the bottom-up review of the data, that we have arrived at a set of recommendations that are the best ones for the Department of the Navy of the future.

This is an outline of what I'll cover. We used these three threads to inform the analytic effort ultimately

leading to the recommendations, looking to find the right base -- the set of right bases and the right places with the right capabilities. Throughout the process, we ensured that all of the discussions had both a strategic and operational focus.

Our process was built to satisfy the law. As noted, we considered that there are four key requirements in the law, and the process attempted to link each piece of it to a requirement of that law. We wanted to ensure that all bases were treated equally. In that regard, we sought to look at everything in a fair and objective way, as required by the law. There were no pre-decisions in this process. And we sought to obtain like data for like types of installations so that we could compare them fairly.

We used certified data during the process of employing our analytical methodology, both for capacity and military value, and then scenario analysis. And I'll go into a little more detail as to what each of those entailed.

We incorporated the future, the 20-year force-structure plan, into our capacity analysis. In addition, we fully considered, as we looked at scenarios, whether the future force structure would be able to fit at that set of bases that were remaining. So we considered it throughout the process.

And then, finally, the statutorily approved selection

criteria formed the basis of key elements of the process.

Next slide.

We were guided by a set of strategies that were developed by the Navy and Marine Corps leadership. The real goal, as Secretary England noted, was to garnish significant savings and develop that set of bases that would be able to support both military readiness and military value for the future. It goes -- this strategy goes hand in hand with other transformational objectives that are ongoing in the Department, initiatives that are ongoing in the Department, to include the Human Capital Strategy Plan and Sea Enterprise, as well as the Fleet Response Plan.

Next slide.

We were organized to support the entirety of the process, both Department of the Navy process and the joint cross-service groups. As you see, we had an infrastructure analysis team. It was made up of both operational and line and staff officers, civilians, and contract support, to bring to bear the broadest experience that we could to actually look at the data from the viewpoint of people who would need to use the installations as we were evaluating them. We also, within that group, had representation from the Naval Audit Service and the Navy Office of General Counsel to ensure that our processes and controls were effective, and that we were, throughout, complying with the

law.

That group supported -- that team supported the Department of the Navy unique process, as well as provided support to each of the joint cross-service groups, so that we were able to, from a data-collection and analysis standpoint, have visibility, not only to what was going on within the Department of the Navy process, but also, within the joint cross-service groups, provide the Navy flavor throughout.

We had, as I noted, the Department of the Navy analysis group that was charged with doing the analysis for the Department of the Navy unique functions and activities. In addition, we formed -- with the members of the Navy and Marine Corps who were on the joint cross-service groups, we formed a functional advisory board that met with our senior-level group, the infrastructure evaluation group, to keep them informed on what was going on within the joint cross-service groups, in terms of data and analysis and approach, so that, throughout, the leadership had visibility of the whole process across Department of Defense.

In the course of this, we had a total of 36 flag, general officer, and senior executives engaged, actively engaged, at -- in these various groups. They met frequently throughout the last two and a half years. We, by my tally, had about 114 meetings, and most of them were multi-hour

meetings. So there was a lot of senior energy developed in both looking at the data, evaluating the analysis that was done by the team, and then formulating recommendations that went forward to the Secretary, the Commandant, and the CNO.

As noted here, we did have representation on the infrastructure steering group and the Infrastructure Executive Council. So, throughout, the Department was very engaged.

Next slide.

We wanted to make sure that the totality of Navy and Marine Corps activities and bases were looked at in the process. And so, one of the very first things that we did was identify all of the Navy activities -- Navy and Marine Corps activities -- and ensure that they were, in effect, assigned to a functional area. And this just displays how that was done, and the total numbers.

What I note there, that we had a series of fencelines.

For us, that really is equivalent to bases, but I call them "fencelines" instead of "bases" because we have a number of Navy bases that are actually made up of more than one place.

For instance, Naval Base Ventura County is the command, but it is made up of both Point Mugu and Point Hueneme. And we wanted to make sure that we had accounted for not only the bases in the aggregate, but also the individual fencelines that have activities on them.

As you might imagine, given the functional review, we had a number of activities that we were looked at not only by Department of the Navy, but also by one or more joint cross-service groups. And so, as you add up the totals of the activities, you will come up with a greater number than is shown in the top. But we did do a review to make sure that everything was being covered analytically in the process.

Next slide.

Data calls, for us, were really the foundation of the process. They provided the certified data that was the backbone of the analytic effort. One of the critical things that we do -- it was a process that we employed in the prior rounds of base closure that provided to be, I think, very, very beneficial to the Department, and that was collect the data from the activity level. We went to the folks who know what is on our bases and how it operates, and we collect -- we started there in collecting the data. In each case, they had to certify that the data was accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. And then the data was passed electronically -- we used a Web-based data-collection tool -- up a chain of command that included both the installation commanders, the installation side of the house, as well as the mission side of the house, to make sure that we had the right eyes on the chain -- the data as

it moved up to the evaluation groups.

I note there the numbers of data calls that were issued. We started with a single-capacity data call that went out to literally every activity within Department of Defense. We followed up with military-value data calls that were targeted to the particular type of activity, the functional activity, to make sure that, again, like-activities received the same data call.

When we got to scenario development, we, again, went to the activities, both those that were proposed for -- to lose functions, as well as those that were proposed to gain functions, to obtain information, financial and other estimates, to determine what the cost and savings, environmental, economic, and other impacts there might be from the recommendations. And throughout the process, as we discovered both with -- as the result of the Naval Audit Service field audit, as well as a review of the analysis team, that there were discrepancies in the data, we did issue data calls and supplemental data calls to make sure that the information that we received was as complete and as good as we could make it.

This displays, really, the process, and the various steps in the process, what we did to ultimately arrive at the recommendations. The diagram, the -- is deliberate. In our process, each step built on the step prior. And,

throughout, we ensured that the military judgment of the folks involved in the decision-making process was fully incorporated in understanding both the data and what the results were.

For capacity analysis, what we sought to use were relevant metrics that really captured the key elements of how you base particular types of functions. And we compared the aggregate of that against the requirements of the 20-year force-structure plan. So, I mentioned at the outset that we ensured the force-structure plan was taken into consideration. We actually compared the -- today's capacity in a functional area against the capacity required for the future force structure, and, from that, characterized what the excess capacity might be.

The other reason for doing it that way was to make sure that we could look at excess capacity in the aggregate, and then look at a variety of combinations to see where that excess could be eliminated, as opposed to trying to determine particulars of excess capacity at any particular base.

In terms of military value, the selection criteria are very broad. It permitted us to tailor the military-value matrix to particular functions. The actual value was developed by our three-star evaluation group. We had a series of questions and scoring statements that related to

each functional area and what was important in each functional area, as well as to the particular selection criteria. And the IEG went through a long process of reviewing each of those questions, developing a score for each of those questions, mapping them to the selection criteria, so that, at the end of the day, each question had a total value that it related -- that related to its importance in the overall scheme. And we'll be prepared to provide all of those matrices and, obviously, all the questions and responses as we work with your staff to go through the details of this analysis.

When we got to scenario development, we used a -- what we -- is -- it's a mixed-integer linear programming model, not to come up with set answers, but actually to develop a set of alternatives that would allow us to look at the various impacts of either minimizing excess capacity or increasing military value, looking at a variety of combinations if you were to go to the most extreme, in terms of numbers of bases that might be closed, to lesser combinations of that. And it really allowed us to explore those tradeoffs as we went into scenario development. The whole process really was designed to be as accurate and fair and responsive and responsible as -- process as we went throughout the look at the data and the analysis.

Next slide.

Again, a schematic just to show how we moved through this process. Frequently, as we got to scenario analysis, which was actually the application of selection criteria 5 through 8, we discovered that there were things that we didn't know. When we looked at the actual data coming in from bases, we learned that there were things at bases that we needed to move. There were other things that allowed for -- as we asked for the bases to come in with information, they had better ideas for particular lay-downs. And when that occurred, we actually developed additional alternatives that were analyzed.

As did that analysis -- and we did the analysis using the COBRA model -- we tried very hard to make our estimates conservative. We neither wanted to overstate savings or understate costs. We also didn't want to gold-plate anything. And so, we wanted to look to make sure that we were building to standards, that we were taking into account the sorts of costs that might be needed at bases as we added functions to existing bases. And, at the end, when we began to see the total lay-down, particularly the lay-down with the joint cross-service groups, we went back to look at impacts on individual bases and make sure that we had accounted for the totality of the input, particularly with regard to support infrastructure such as clinics and bachelor quarters and the like, and made sure that those

were incorporated into our estimates.

In the environmental side, we think we are much better characterized now than we were ten years ago, and we used the report that's provided to Congress every year to understand and consider the environmental restoration costs at the bases that we recommended for closure and realignment. Within the COBRA model, we did include costs associated with environmental compliance and particulars of closure. For instance, in both New London and Portsmouth, we ensured that the COBRA analysis, the costs in the COBRA, included the costs associated with the nuclear decommissioning of those facilities, which are not environmental costs, but actually are, in effect, facility-shutdown costs.

Next slide.

This displays the -- really, the progression of the analysis throughout, and how we started within Department of the Navy with the particular functions, went to a number of scenarios that we analyzed, and then ultimately resulted in the 53 recommendations that the Secretary mentioned.

Next slide.

And these are the results: nine major bases, 46 minor bases, and eight bases realigned. And I think, at the testimony yesterday from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, they noted that their characterization of major

bases really is a way of sort of drawing a line, in terms of size, that the major bases are deemed major because they have more than \$100 million in plant-replacement value. That doesn't mean to imply that the minor bases were considered any less -- or deemed any more -- any less important. It really was just a way to segregate, sort of, size, in terms of these recommendations.

We did receive one request from a local government relating to potential for closure. That was from the City of Concord, California. We fully considered that request, and one of our recommendations does close part, although not all, of those weapons station at Concord.

Now, what I'd like to do is walk through some of the detail on how it played out, in terms of the analysis, for both -- for major/minor closures, as well as for one of the realignments.

One of the major closures, obviously, is the closure of Sub Base New London. We started with the capacity analysis, which, as I noted, was an analysis across the entirety of the surface/subsurface function. We looked at all places within Department of the Navy that had piers. That was really the critical element. And so, the totality of the universe included every place within the Department that you could actually berth ships.

Overall, once we completed the characterization of

that, we subtracted out those bases that were not operational bases, like weapons stations. And we have some air stations with piers; we subtracted those out. And, in addition, at the operational bases, we added an allowance to make sure that we could accommodate the Fleet Response Plan, that we could accommodate both maintenance and weapons handling. So, in other words, we wanted to make sure that we had built in the flexibility to do the sorts of berthing and home-porting movement as is necessary at our bases.

When we had completed that, we had identified that compared to the future force-structure plan, we had an excess capacity of about 88 cruiser equivalents. So, in other words, space to berth 88 cruisers. We had factors that identified every ship against a cruiser equivalent. A carrier is four cruiser equivalents, as an example.

From there, we moved into military-value analysis. I noted that we had a number of scoring statements, a number of questions. We had a total of 61 scoring statements within the military-value analysis for surface/subsurface. That was made up, in most cases, of multiple questions for each scoring statement. And, as a result of the analysis of the key attributes for surface/subsurface, we developed a set of military-value scores for each base within this universe that ranged from about 37 to almost 75 as the numeric scores representing where those bases fell in

comparison to each other.

From there, we used the capacity analysis and the military-value analysis to develop a set of alternatives for closure. The actual alternatives that we looked at, and looked at in multiple iterations, included potential closures of New London, Pascagoula, Ingleside, Sub Base San Diego, and Naval Station Everett.

The -- I note here the alternatives that we looked at specifically relating to the East Coast submarine lay-down, looking at alternatives that moved subs from New London to Norfolk, New London to Norfolk and Kings Bay, as well as from Norfolk to New London.

And then, finally, through the result of looking at all of those alternatives, comparing all of the possibilities of laying down the force on the East Coast in a variety of different ways, the IEG ultimately took to the Secretary and the CNO and the Commandant the recommendation to close New London and to move the submarines to Norfolk and Kings Bay, and the sub school to Kings Bay. And I show the cost and the savings and the resulting capacity decrease from there.

Next slide.

This map shows, for the surface/subsurface area, the total of the recommendations and where we end up, as far as basing lay-down for our ships and submarines within the Navy as a result of the total recommendations. We ended up

essentially ensuring that, not only did we reduce capacity, but that we also retained strategic dispersal between -- on each coast, as well as the Pacific, and sufficient capacity to allow for not only surge, but also, as I noted, home-port changes and the potential flexibility of force-structure changes in the future.

Next slide.

We followed a similar process when it came to some of the minor closures; for instance, Reserve centers and recruiting districts. We evaluated for recruiting districts, 31 of them overall. We looked at a variety of alternatives that would close various numbers of them in an attempt to really get the overhead minimized without breaking the recruiting function. And through consultation with Navy Recruiting Command, we concluded, finally, that five recruiting districts was about the right number; and, hence, have recommended closing five. The remaining -- the recruiting stations that these recruiting districts manage will be spread to the other recruiting districts. And, in essence, the remaining system, will absorb the workload, the management workload that is currently present in these five recruiting districts.

Go to the next slide.

And this shows the map of the lay-down. Essentially, what's happening within the recruiting command functionality

within the Navy is that it is organizing into two districts, an -- or two regions -- an eastern region and a western region, and they're looking to have the recruiting districts be located in population centers that both are in proximity to their recruiting stations, as well as access to transportation hubs, so that they can actually ride the circuit to visit the various recruiting stations. And we believe that our recommendations foster that.

Go to the next slide.

And this represents an example of a realignment. We are recommending realignment of NAS Pensacola to move officer training to Newport, Rhode Island, consolidated into a single site, where it's co-located with other training, as well as with the War College, which ends up with putting Navy in a similar position at Newport as the Marine Corps is at Quantico, with a co-location of a number of different types of training there. Again, the process was followed throughout, starting with an initial capacity analysis.

One of the things we learned when we looked at capacity in the training area, in particular, is that we were using classroom capacity, classroom availability, as a measure of capacity. And aboard multifunctional bases, our ability to eliminate that excess is somewhat limited. Best way to eliminate it is either to tear down a building or turn it to other use. But we do believe that the -- this realignment

will reduce overhead. It will allow for follow-on training at Newport for folks coming out of OCS, which saves us PCS costs, and, as I said, does create a degree of synergy with other training and education activities at Newport.

Next slide.

And this just displays that movement.

Okay, go to the map.

This map shows all of the Department of the Navy recommendations. We -- including the Reserve center recommendations. For the Reserve centers, we wanted to make sure that we ended up with a geographically-based, although slimmed-down set of centers, and we believe we have accomplished that across the Department. And we'll be prepared to go with your staff into any level of detail on all of these recommendations.

Go the final slide.

As the Secretary noted, this was a bottom-up process, and we did base everything on the certified data collected from our activities. That analysis was -- the analysis of the data was conducted by the team, reviewed by the Department of the Navy analysis group, who took forward recommendations for a way ahead to the evaluation group. From there, the Secretary, the CNO, and the Commandant were given an opportunity to weigh in and determine what recommendations should go forward, ultimately, to the

Infrastructure Executive Council.

We believe that the recommendations, at the end of the day, advance the aims of the Department and are looking forward to the opportunity to work with you and your staff in reviewing all of them.

Thank you, sir.

Chairman Principi: Thank you for a very detailed presentation on your process and methodology. I think it will be very, very helpful.

Secretary England: Well, Mr. Chairman, just -- and members of the Commission -- we took this extraordinarily seriously. I mean, this is a very, very serious undertaking. We had very well-defined processes which we followed rigorously throughout. In my judgment, it was objective and very, very fact-based. And it was comprehensive. It was extensive. We have provided you our very best recommendations.

That said, you know, you'll be receiving some information we don't have the benefit of from communities, and recognize that, indeed, you may come to other decisions.

But, again, we will provide you all of our rationale, our thinking, our data, and would be pleased to meet with your staffs and analysts. At the end of the day, we want the very best answers for America. So, we appreciate the opportunity to be here.

And, again, I think -- well, I know we've done the very best we can do, as an organization, and now we'll support you in your deliberations and findings for the next few months.

Chairman Principi: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Admiral Clark, do you have any comments that you'd like to add?

Admiral Clark: I don't have a prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. I align myself with the comments of the Secretary and say that -- reinforce that this is -- there are several attributes of this that I think are very important. Never before has a BRAC had this kind of focus on jointness. It was a key part from the very beginning of the process.

I want to emphasize that Navy representation was clearly evident on each of those teams. They kept me apprised of what they were doing, although my review -- my ability to impact that process was at the executive-review level, where it should be.

The -- I'm taken by the nature of the process and the analytics. I will tell you that when I started this process, I had one objective in mind, and I was vocal about this. When this -- when we were completed with our actions, I wanted to be able to sit in front of this committee, and I wanted -- in front of this Commission -- and I wanted to be able to testify to the fairness and the thoroughness of the

analytic process and to the manner in which we had sought to make it as objective as possible. And it is my view that we have done just that, and I look forward to the interchange.

Chairman Principi: Thank you, Admiral.

General Hagee?

General Hagee: Sir, I would just underline what Admiral Clark said. This is the first BRAC process that I have been involved in. I was really quite surprised on the amount of data that were collected and the number of man hours that went into this. We really focused on looking for joint solutions, and I support the recommendations and look forward to your questions, sir.

Chairman Principi: Thank you, General. Thank you all.

Let me begin the questioning by focusing on the closure of New London Submarine Base. The move of assets from New London to Kings Bay, leaving Norfolk aside for the moment, is a large move, in a relative sense. And I know that military value is the highest criteria that we need to consider, and rightfully so, but I'd like to skip over military value for a moment and focus on the four other criteria.

I understand that slightly over 3200 personnel will move from New London to Kings Bay, which represents about a 21 percent increase in the employment base in St. Mary's metropolitan area, which is, obviously, a large, large jump

in employment in a relatively, I guess, small county of St. Mary's. One of the factors we have to consider is the ability of the receiving installation, both on the military base of Kings Bay, as well as in the community, to support the increased personnel and mission and dependents that'll be moving into that area. I haven't been to Kings Bay in quite some time, but the last time I was there, it certainly appeared to me that they had limited infrastructure on Kings Bay, on the base itself, and certainly very, very limited infrastructure in the county, in terms of roads, schools, housing.

Can you tell me, have you done the analysis to say that St. Mary's County and Kings Bay can support this large increase? Your cost estimate of \$679 million seems somewhat low to me, although construction costs in Georgia are a lot lower than the Northeast, for example. But could you just address this issue, please, about what the costs are going to be to build up the infrastructure on Kings Bay to support this increased assets, as well as, Can the county support it?

Secretary England: Let me -- Mr. Chairman, if I can, let me -- I have some numbers, I believe, in that regard. Our estimate is, it would cost \$238 million at Kings Bay itself, at the base, and that includes changes we have to do for piers and that sort of thing, but it's also housing on

the base, it's healthcare on the base. So the facilities on the base would expand, and we have the capacity to do that, and we have costed out all of that, and that's part of the cost analysis that goes with this recommended move.

We also had the commanders -- we did at all of our bases -- we had the commander work with the community. And they looked at all the attributes in the communities. They looked at education and childcare and housing and medical providers, transportation, utilities, police force -- all those attributes were considered, and that is all part of the certified data that was part of this whole decision process. And, again, we have that data for your perusal.

So the answer, Mr. Chairman, is, we did look at all -- in all of our moves, we looked at both ends of this, whoever was, you know, losing and moving, and whoever was on the receiving end. We -- so, we looked at the analysis at both ends of this to make sure that it all fit within the criteria.

Chairman Principi: What are the costs to close down New London? I mean, just both -- you know, just closing it down -- the environmental issues that are going to have to be addressed. Are those all taken into consideration? Do you have a figure on what the total cost of closing New London are going to be to the Navy?

Secretary England: I believe it was in that chart.

Total cost was --

Ms. Davis: Right.

Secretary England: -- 600 and something -- 653. That is the total cost.

Chairman Principi: That's the total cost including closing New London and building out Kings Bay?

Ms. Davis: Yes, sir, it is. I'll have to get you the detailed breakdown on that. But we did, in the context of that, as I noted, include the management costs for the shutdown. We did include the decommissioning costs for the facility at New London. My recollection is that that was something in the neighborhood of \$9 million, but I'm not entirely sure. I'd have to get you -- and we'll provide that for the record.

The environmental costs, as you know -- and this is consistent with the policy provided across Department -- or followed across Department of Defense were not added to COBRA -- the cleanup costs -- but they were provided for the consideration of the decision-makers.

Chairman Principi: Thank you.

Secretary England: But the bottom line is, Mr. Chairman, the number, the 679, is all the total cost, so that's all of the up-front cost associated with this move, both at New London and at Kings Bay. So that's the total cost that we can identify -- and, again, all those details

-- but that's all the costs we could identify. So, the answer is, to the very best of our knowledge, we have included all of our -- all the costs.

Admiral Clark: Can I say one thing about scope? I think it's important to -- but, first of all, New London is a perfect example to raise when we talk about very, very difficult choices. First of all, we have a heritage in New London. By the way, I'm a surface guy, but I was stationed in New London, Connecticut, for two years. We have -- you know, these bases -- we established personal relations. This is difficult.

But here's what -- the circumstances we face. A few years back, we had almost a hundred attack submarines. We -- our number's in the fifties now, and I've testified and submitted documentation that my belief is the number in the future is going to be somewhere in the neighborhood in the low forties. My number is 41. We've got too much structure.

In order for us to have the Navy that we need to have in the future, we have got to redirect resources to the recapitalization process. And over the course of the almost five years that I've been the CNO, this has been one of my major efforts. Anne Davis called it Sea Enterprise. It's our initiative to learn how to run this place more effectively.

So, for us, it was really -- and was -- to make sure that we have strategic dispersion, we wanted to retain two sites on each coast. And so, we're looking -- you know, this, then, looked at where we had growth room and where we did not have growth room for uncertainties in the future. And we believe that this is the right choice. And we believe that when you analyze the analytical data, when you look at the analytics behind this, you'll see the logic for our reasoning.

Chairman Principi: And from a strategic military-value perspective, it makes sense to --

Admiral Clark: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And I will tell you, I have sought the counsel of the senior submariner that I have in the United States Navy, Active Duty, four-star officer. I sought his counsel in -- with this in mind; not, Where do I want to be next year? The thing about this -- this question is, Where do I want to be in 20 years? What do I want this to look like? And to get there, you've got to start. And this -- the recommendation that we provided is the direction to get us where we think we need to be 20 years from now.

Chairman Principi: Thank you.

Mr. Hansen?

Mr. Hansen: I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me say, in the past I had the opportunity of

working with Secretary England in some very sticky and difficult problems, and he handled them so well -- I just wanted to compliment you. I was just amazed. And compliment you, also, on your new position, if you consider that a compliment or condolences, either way you want to look at it.

[Laughter.]

Secretary England: I do, and I thank you very much, Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Hansen: It's always great to work with Admiral Clark, and who will be retiring shortly, I understand. And he's written an enviable record in the Navy, and we appreciate him.

You know, I remember a few years ago, after we supposedly brought down the Soviet Union, in Room 2118 of the Armed Services there, we had some of the generals and admirals of the old Soviet Union in, and we got into some very interesting discussions. And some of those discussions were, How did the United States do better than they did? And basically it boiled down to technology, is that -- we were ahead of them in so many, many, many different areas. And they all said that. And then they kind of liked our way of life, also, as I recall, because we got into that.

As I look at the Navy now and look at what you're going through -- my goodness, as I see these new ships that you're

that kind of stuff, but I have to think back over the many, many hearings that we had in the Armed Services Committee, and also in the Resource Committee. And many times we had a commanding officer from one base or another in front of us, and they lamented the fact of how difficult it was -- Camp Pendleton is an example of that -- that the youngsters couldn't even come in and dig a foxhole, because they were afraid they would hurt something. Other areas, we had -- every service, except the Air Force, came in and talked about how difficult it was to do it. And I think you're shackled, to a certain extent, and maybe, Commandant, you would like to comment on that problem you've got. I read it differently as I read how everyone is trying to appease a lot of these environmental things, which, in my opinion, are very extreme in many instances. I think we all want to be good stewards of the land, but I think the military is really under the gun, in a way, because they have that unique property that kind of lends itself to the -- whatever it may be on that property. Do you have a problem with that, Commandant, if I may ask?

General Hagee: Oh, yes, sir, we do. Thank you very much for that question. There is a very real challenge, not only with training ground forces, but training air forces. And the way we approached this BRAC is that we're probably not going to get any more training areas, either ground or

air. We need to preserve those training areas -- ground training areas and aviation training areas that we have. And that is truly military value that we get from those training areas. So, I think that you'll see, in our BRAC recommendations, that we retain those particular training areas. But I do not see that challenge going away, sir.

I would like to add a little bit to what Admiral Clark said about our increased capability. And he spoke very eloquently about what we're going to be able to do in the future. There are two platforms that are coming on -- the Joint Strike Fighter and the MV-22 -- where we looked for a joint solution for training, where, for the Joint Strike Fighter, we're going to establish a -- we, the Department of Defense, will establish a joint training facility down in Florida to handle all the pilots going into that remarkable aircraft. And we're going to establish a joint training facility for MV-22, Navy and Marine Corps, in North Carolina. So, as all three of us said during our opening statement, we looked at joint solutions for some of the challenges that we're going to have in the future.

Mr. Hansen: Thank you very much. Thank you for your response.

Chairman Principi: General Hill?

General Hill: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Admiral Clark, General Hagee, and Ms. Davis, for coming and

looking at, they look like something out Star Wars, almost. And then you've got the Joint Strike Fighter coming along. What effect will that have at all on how you reconfigure or work with your naval depots at this time? Do you -- can you see any effect as you see this technology change coming about?

Admiral Clark: I absolutely do. In our program that's before the Congress as we speak, only one of the platforms has delivered, and all the rest of them are in our future -- DD(X), LCS, CVM-21. Virginia-class submarine is the only -- of -- and LPD-17, maritime pre-positioned force and fleet of the future -- only the Virginia-class submarine has delivered, of this whole new class and family of ships; and that, just a few months ago.

So, the future is out in front of us, and the technology is changing everything. Let me give you an example. Next month, we will go lay the keel on Littoral Combatant Ship. It's going to change everything. Littoral Combatant Ship will be a smaller platform. On June the 2nd, we will lay the keel. It will be -- it will capitalize on the genius of our people. And young people today are computer whizzes, and it'll be roll-on/roll-off plug-and-play or plug-and-fight technology. This will -- in fact, that, along with new operational concepts that we've put in place the last five years -- Sea Swap is an example; Fleet

Response Plan, a much more responsive force, a much more capable force -- all of these things are changing for the -- will create change in the future.

Here's a key point. Ms. Davis made the point that we used conservative estimates. Let me give you one key example. With Sea Swap, we have proven that we can provide roughly a third more operational capability with the same number of ships than we had in the old operational concept.

And that was, now we send a ship forward and we rotate the crews instead of sending the ship back and forth. When we do that, we are going to be able to produce more combat capability with fewer ships. We did not go way down the line and say, okay, this BRAC is based on some future number that's way down. We started -- I started talking about 375 ships, Mr. Secretary, four years ago, and it was an estimate for the future. In the middle of this BRAC process, we went and recalculated, based upon the trendlines we see in the future, to 260 to 325 ships. We ran the analysis on the high end of that. We are betting on no -- in other words, we were conservative in our estimates, and my estimation is we will end up with more capacity than we need, even with these recommendations.

Mr. Hansen: Now, if I may ask this question, I know it's kind of fashionable to talk environment, and I know that part of your criteria is environmental cleanup and all