

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman

**DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND
REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
FINAL PRESENTATION**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

AUGUST 20, 2005



BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

Department of Defense
Final Presentation

Saturday, August 20, 2005
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BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

**Chairman's
Opening Statement**

**Hearing
of the
2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission**

Final Comments of the Department of Defense

**Washington, D.C.
August 20, 2005**

Good Morning.

Welcome to

I'm Anthony Principi, and I will chair this hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. I'm pleased to be joined by all of my fellow Commissioners, James Bilbray, Phil Coyle, Hal Gehman, James Hanson, James Hill, Lloyd Newton, Samuel Skinner, and Sue Turner for today's session.

On May 13th of this year the Secretary of Defense announced his recommendations for closing or realigning military installations. Since that time the Commission and its staff have analyzed those recommendations and supporting documents and worked with the Department to clarify the data and resolve questions as they arose. At a hearing on May 16th, the Secretary discussed his recommendations with the Commission.

We are mandated to be, and we are, an independent Commission. We should not, and will not, deliberate and decide the questions before us based solely on data provided by the Department of Defense. To that end, we analyzed data provided by other Federal agencies including the Government Accountability Office, by state and local governments, and by interested citizens.

Commissioners and staff made 182 visits to 173 installations. We conducted 19 regional hearings around the country. We held another 16 legislative and deliberative hearings and had hundreds of meetings with community representatives and elected officials. We received more than 80,000 electronic messages, and over a half million pieces of mail. We have manual scanned more than 200,000 documents into our e-library. We hosted more than 1100 visitors to our offices, responded to over 7000 media inquiries, issued more than 50 press releases and advisories, and received more than 500 telephone calls a week. Our website was visited eight million times.

*For the Court
For the Bar, For
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Input from non-defense sources is an invaluable source of information for the Commission as we decide questions that will have a profound and lasting impact on communities, on our armed forces, and on America's citizens and servicemembers.

That input, combined with the Commission's analysis, illuminates issues that should be addressed before the Commission begins its final deliberation and decision process on Wednesday of next week. This hearing will provide the Department of Defense and the service departments with an opportunity to address unresolved issues and respond to Commissioners' questions.

I am pleased to welcome Secretary Michael Wynn representing the Office of the Secretary of Defense; Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, Admiral Robert Willard, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper – each of them representing their service; as well as Vice Admiral Evan Chanik, Director for Force Structure, Resources and Assessment of the Joint Staff.

Gentlemen, today we will raise a significant question relating to the costs and savings attributed to the DoD BRAC recommendations.

Will the claimed savings actually be realized? Are costs understated? Will actual costs exceed the amount allocated for environmental remediation?

Has the chasm gulf separating the Air Force from the Air National Guard been bridged?

How should the Commission account for the many uncertainties implicit in decisions with a two decade time horizon? The unclassified version of the Secretary's twenty year threat assessment talks about a range of challenges --- will BRAC decisions increase or reduce the service's options for responding to these challenges? Will the Department, after BRAC, still have the infrastructure to respond to traditional challenges as well as non-traditional ones? What would be the effect of the turbulence of BRAC implementation on armed services already stressed by our ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan?

The services are in the process of major transformations of doctrine and structure. Should BRAC decisions respond to and reflect the final outcome of transformational change? Or is it proper to use BRAC as a vehicle to drive transformation?

How should the Commission respond to the fact that acceptance of the Secretary's recommendations would leave large areas of our country, New England in particular, virtually stripped of military presence?

Given the lack of input from the Department of Homeland Security, how can we assess the effect of the BRAC recommendations on our nation's ability to respond to threats to homeland security or, even more importantly, to events?

I hope the light shed on these questions today will be reflected next week in productive deliberations and prudent decisions.

I now ask 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.