

Press Comments
 Commissioner Newton
 BRAC 2005

Turner

National News Articles

Threat shaped BRAC round; Post-Sept. 11 environment helped influence latest plan

Marine Corps Times

June 6, 2005

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'This is about people': Workers top BRAC panel's concerns

Federal Times

May 23, 2005

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Regulatory Intelligence Data

May 18, 2005

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Local News Articles

Delegation gives best shot for bases at BRAC hearing Talk centers on strategic Gulf location

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

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SAVING A SUB BASE: '93 OFFERS STRATEGY LESSONS; UNCERTAINTY IN GROTON

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005-



Hartford Courant
May 23, 2005

"Depending on where you are, it may not be easy to find a new job," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, another commission member. "These kinds of questions are important."

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

Threat shaped BRAC round; Post-Sept. 11 environment helped influence latest plan
Marine Corps Times
June 6, 2005

For the next seven months, the debate over the Defense Department's ambitious plans to overhaul its basing structure will focus on measuring money: costs saved, money spent, jobs and income lost in communities that would lose bases.

But the Pentagon, defense analysts and the independent commission that will pass judgment on the proposal are likely to focus on another, less tangible measure: how well the plan helps the military transform into the force needed for the post-Sept. 11 world of terrorist threats, counterinsurgency and homeland security.

"It's the \$64,000 question that only the end of the process will reveal to us," retired Adm. Harold Gehman, one of nine members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, said between hearings during the panel's first week of work.

But comments and questions from the commissioners and outside analysts suggest a mixed bag of recommendations, some of which are clearly aimed at military transformation, others with little or no connection, and occasionally missed opportunities that could have furthered the ongoing overhaul of the Cold War-era military.

While many observers see the Army's massive changes - accommodating the move of more than 40,000 soldiers based overseas back to stateside bases and a reorganization of the service's combat units - as directly related to defense reform, there is less of a sense of revolutionary change in the other services.

And despite a long list of initiatives to foster more cooperation among the services, commissioners spent four days of hearings asking defense officials whether more could and should be done to encourage "jointness," an oft-stated milestone of the Pentagon's transformation goals.

Changed environment

Between now and September, the nine-member commission appointed by President Bush will review the Pentagon's proposals, perhaps make changes, and forward its recommendations to Bush before final approval by Congress.

Members left little doubt that the changed defense environment will weigh heavily on their

**Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005**

considerations.

"It definitely plays a significant role for us," said Philip Coyle, a commission member and a former Pentagon technology expert.

During testimony by senior defense leaders, representatives from each service and several groups that looked at defensewide operations. Coyle continually asked for examples of how the Pentagon's latest proposals differ from past base-closing rounds, which took place in a period of peace and shrinking defense budgets.

"Their answers were more about process than the content of the recommendations," he said.

Only detailed examination of thousands of pages of Pentagon justifications and data, which the panel received after the May 16-19 hearings, will reveal how well the Pentagon did in tailoring these plans to support its transformation vision, Coyle said.

John Pike, a defense analyst for GlobalSecurity.org, said the level of reform varies widely from service to service.

"The Navy's closures, as far as I can understand, would have happened regardless of anything we've dealt with in the last four years," Pike said.

For example, proposed closings of submarine facilities in New England stem from decisions made long ago to shrink the submarine fleet.

However, the Army would make several changes that Pike said reveal a new mind-set. Consolidating artillery and air defense schools at Fort Sill, Okla., and the armor and infantry schools in a single location at Fort Benning, Ga., are more ambitious than anything the Navy or Air Force proposed.

The recommendations also include plans to accommodate an Army reorganization that will break its 33 active-duty combat brigades into 43 smaller, leaner, more deployable units.

"What struck me is that the other services talked about how much money they're going to save," Gehman said after the Army's May 18 appearance before the commission. "[The Army] is doing other things."

Supporting 'jointness'

The plan makes progress in one of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's major transformation goals - increasing cooperation among the services, said Christopher Hellman, an analyst with the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

Hellman pointed to the Air Force's decision to cede control of Pope Air Force Base, N.C., to the Army, which will combine it with neighboring Fort Bragg.

The Army and Air Force also would consolidate management of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base near Seattle, and plan to locate the Army and Air Force components of U.S. Central Command together at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

Hellman said these are examples of "the difference with BRAC rounds in the past."

In the four previous base-closing rounds from 1988 to 1995, he said, the individual services developed all the proposals, whereas the Pentagon process this time included joint cross-service groups that looked at topics such as headquarters placement and opportunities for joint basing.

Still, commissioners hinted that they see areas where the Pentagon did not go far enough with jointness. Coyle questioned defense officials on the lack of consolidation in research and technology; retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen **Turner** wondered why the Pentagon did not look at joint basic training; and retired Army Gen. James Hill asked why there was no recommendation to combine the services' three war colleges.

In some cases, officials said, the walls of separation between services were just too high to overcome. Charles Abell, the Pentagon's second-ranking personnel official, said the services resisted proposals to combine the war colleges and undergraduate pilot training.

'This is about people': Workers top BRAC panel's concerns

Federal Times

May 23, 2005

Some members of the independent panel examining the Defense Department's base closing plan say they are skeptical about proposals to move thousands of civilian jobs to new locations.

"We will not let go of that," said Harold Gehman, a retired Navy admiral and one of the nine commissioners who must pass judgment by September on the most ambitious base-closing round yet. Gehman said the impact on civilian workers will be among the biggest topics of interest as the panel begins a series of site visits and regional hearings between now and early July.

The panel has until September to analyze the Defense Department proposals, agree on any changes and forward their recommendations to President Bush. They face a number of complications: This is the largest Pentagon base shuffling yet, after four previous rounds; the many proposals are linked and will be hard to amend piecemeal; and the commission has two months less time to work than previous BRAC commissions.

But panel members signaled that the impact on workers will be among their top concerns.

"This is about people," said Commissioner Philip Coyle, an expert on defense technology and research. "It's not about bricks and mortar."

He and other commissioners said they fear the relocations, especially those involving science and technology workers, will create a brain drain as skilled workers choose not to relocate.

Among the biggest concerns: the Army's proposal to close Fort Monmouth, N.J., which would shift more than 4,000 civilian positions, mostly to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., to create a center to research command, control and communications technologies.

"I disagree with that decision," Commissioner James Bilbray, a former Nevada congressman, told Army officials during a May 18 hearing. That has been the only occasion in four days of hearings

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

in which a commissioner expressed outright opposition to a closing.

Gehman, in a hearing the following day, questioned the Defense Department's top research and engineering official on plans to move thousands of skilled workers, which he said will result in little financial benefit.

"The payoff looks pretty thin, and the personal pain appears pretty high" for civilian workers, Gehman told Ronald Sega.

Pentagon officials defended the changes as necessary to improve the efficiency of their technology efforts - and said they considered the human costs.

"We were very cognizant of the impact of the human capital piece," Sega told commissioners.

The closing announcement has Fort Monmouth employees worried, said John Poitras, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 1904, which represents the base's civilian workers.

"People are jittery and scared," Poitras said. "They don't want to uproot their families. That expertise could be lost."

Dozens of Pentagon proposals would eliminate about 18,000 civilian jobs and move thousands of positions, often to new locations hundreds of miles away.

Along with the proposed closing of Fort Monmouth, the Defense Department has asked to close the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine, eliminating 4,500 civilian workers; close the Red River Army Depot in Texas, eliminating nearly 2,500 civilian positions; move more than 3,300 civilian jobs in the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to Indianapolis from locations across the country; shift about 1,400 positions from the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois; eliminate 1,800 civilian jobs by closing Fort McPherson, Ga.; and shift about 15,000 workers out of lease office space in suburban Northern Virginia to Fort Belvoir, Va., and other installations around the country.

"Most military facilities have a significant civilian work force," commissioner Sue Ellen **Turner**, a retired Air Force brigadier general, said May 19. "It may or may not be easy for those people to find a new job, to get placement elsewhere in the system, or to relocate."

Brac Commission Hears How Army Realignment Will Build Future Force
Regulatory Intelligence Data
May 18, 2005

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, May 18, 2005) - The planned closures of many Army Reserve and National Guard centers and several military installations, and the return of units from overseas were among the primary concerns expressed when Army officials testified before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission May 18.

Under the Army's current recommendations, the 2005 BRAC would close 15 installations, seven leased sites, 176 Army Reserve installations, and 211 Army National Guard facilities. It will also create seven training "centers of excellence," seven joint technical and research facilities, and four

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

joint material and logistics facilities

Giving primary information for the Army were Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Infrastructure Development Craig College.

"The recommendations of BRAC 2005 will holistically transform the current infrastructure into a streamlined portfolio of installations with an 11-percent increase in military value which, thereby, enables the operational Army to better meet the challenges of the 21st-century security environment," Harvey told the commission.

Rebase troops

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, who chairs the commission, started the questioning by asking Schoomaker about the return of troops from overseas.

"With regard to rebasing the 70,000 overseas troops, they don't add up to 70,000 in the numbers we have," Principi said.

Schoomaker said the Army's portion of the 70,000 troops to be rebased is only 47,000, of which 22,000 are in units that will stand down and be reassigned in the new modular force structure. He said the remainder is made up of larger units that will return from overseas and be distributed to large installations such as Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Lewis, Wash. and Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

College told the commission these major moves will take place over a period of years.

Principi also asked if the movement of large units to Fort Bliss might overload the area's communities, or lead to water-supply problems in the area's dry climate.

"All of this is informed by the national military defense strategy which adds 10 brigades to the Army force structure and 34 brigades to the National Guard and Reserve," Schoomaker said. He said Fort Bliss offered the right mix of maneuver space, unrestricted airspace, free radio spectrum for the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and access to sister services.

Commissioner Sue Ellen **Turner** asked if the closure of Red River Army Depot, Texas, called for in the BRAC plan is a good idea in the wake of media reports of difficulty fielding items such as up-armored Humvees.

Harvey said the Army has an excess production capacity, and it will be enhanced by creating "centers of excellence" in specific fields.

"In the past 50 years, the highest number of direct labor hours we've ever used is 25 million. By closing Red River and creating centers of excellence, we can surge to 50 million direct labor hours," he said.

Transforming the National Guard, Reserve

Commissioner Samuel Skinner asked about the closure of National Guard and Reserve centers, and their consolidation into joint centers.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

"I guess it's like 'Field of Dreams.' You're saying that if you build these world-class facilities, you hope the Guard will come," Skinner said.

Schoomaker said the Army is continuing to work toward a "one-Army" concept.

"The Guard and Reserve are increasingly important to that one-Army concept," he said. "What we're doing is taking overstructure out of the Guard and Reserve and making them into whole units. You said it pretty well. We are committed to building 125 facilities with the hopes that 211 state facilities will align into them."

Specially sworn in to testify, Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, told the commission the states have cooperated with the Army's analysis of which sites will be closed under the current plan.

"These realignments started from field submissions," Schultz said. "They have been line-time detail reviewed by the state leaderships."

Harvey said that the new joint centers will be constructed in the same areas as the old bases slated for closure. "We plan them for the same demographic area, within a 50 mile radius of where they were before," he said.

"There are two points about this," Schoomaker said. "The first is the obvious opportunity to improve training and retention. The second, as we look at this movement we would expect to see divestiture of the old sites, and direct our funding into these 125 centers."

Combining bases

Commissioner James Hill said he was pleased to see DoD "get it right" by combining Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg N.C., in the current BRAC proposal. He asked why similar steps aren't planned for McChord Air Force Base and Fort Lewis, Wash.

"The big difference is the Air Force's intended use of Pope. They'll be leaving only a small element there," College said. "So it makes sense to have a single entity under Army control. McChord will retain a large Air Force presence." He said the current study is to determine how the bases might share suppliers and support services.

Hill also returned to the subject of increasing the troop numbers at Fort Bliss, asking if there were environmental issues to address. Schoomaker said the environmental issues there are minimal, and the base will be well served by being close to additional training space at White Sands, and Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., and Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz.

Hill also asked why the Army had decided to put its decisions regarding leased property inside the BRAC plan. "You could have terminated those leases if you wanted," he said.

College said BRAC was the appropriate time to analyze and address the use of leased property.

"If you're going to take on the issue of the high cost of leased space, it should be looked at to determine how that infrastructure would work to support the team. We thought BRAC is the

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

precise tool to look at it in a comprehensive way, rather than taking small steps over time."

Hill's final question concerned the move of research and development from Fort Monmouth, N.J., to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Harvey called the move "a judgment call," but said because Monmouth is relatively close to Maryland that he expects more of the high-tech specialists from Monmouth will make the move than would happen with a larger geographic move.

Commissioner Philip Coyle asked about the many differences between this round of BRAC and previous rounds.

Schoomaker said the current round of BRAC is allowing the Army to accomplish numerous goals as the force structure changes.

"We have the opportunity to set the force the way we want it to be in the future," he said.

Local News Articles

Delegation gives best shot for bases at BRAC hearing Talk centers on strategic Gulf location

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

July 12, 2005

SAN ANTONIO - Flanked by about 500 supporters wearing yellow "Save Ingleside" T-shirts, three Coastal Bend representatives fought to keep Naval Station Ingleside open at a regional hearing for Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas on Monday at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

Paul Ryan, former commander of mine warfare, South Texas Military Facilities Task Force Chairman Loyd Neal and retired Vice Admiral Al Konetzni stated their case to three Base Realignment and Closure commissioners. BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi left the hearing early to conduct a site visit in Arkansas and was not present for Ingleside's argument. Principi toured Naval Station Ingleside on Sunday.

The 45-minute presentation included information on the base's military value as a port and homeland defense asset. What separated Ingleside's argument from any other Texas military facility was its sea-based defense of the Gulf, Ryan said.

"Other bases, like Sheppard (Air Force Base) argued for air defense," Ryan said. "Ingleside has the only deepwater port in the Gulf and is a much needed key to protecting its waters."

The Pentagon on May 13 recommended Naval Station Ingleside for closure and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi and the Corpus Christi Army Depot for realignment. The nine-member BRAC commission is responsible for reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations and making a final recommendation to the president by Sept. 8.

Monday's hearing was the last chance local representatives had to make a formal presentation to BRAC commissioners. While the commission reviews the new information, local base advocates will continue to make an argument to civilian and military representatives to keep Ingleside open.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

"We'll be meeting with scores of military and civilian people and keep fighting," said U.S. Rep. Solomon D. Ortiz. "It's still not over, but I think we've left a good impression. Body language and eye contact of the commissioners led me to believe they were very interested."

Commissioners would not comment on specifics, but said they found the presentations interesting.

Commissioner Lloyd "Fig" Newton said he had found all arguments interesting. "Now, we have to take that data and compare it to what we have."

BRAC commissioner and chairwoman of the hearing, Sue Ellen **Turner**, said the commission is still in its information-gathering stage and there is still much information to be considered.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison said Naval Station Ingleside was among nine Texas military communities Monday that left a good impression on the commissioners.

"We were able to put out facts with a lot of community support," Hutchison said. "That combination makes an impression."

Gov. Rick Perry said all presentations were strong, and were opportunities to show that the Department of Defense had not taken homeland defense into consideration when it recommended closing bases on the Gulf of Mexico.

New Orleans Naval Support Activity base working to get back off BRAC
New Orleans City Business
June 27, 2005

It's a battle of numbers between the U.S. Department of Defense and Louisiana officials trying to keep the New Orleans Naval Support Activity base open.

The DOD claims it can save \$276.4 million over 20 years if it shuts NSA down.

James Hinkle, an analyst helping New Orleans, disputes DOD claims it can save \$45 million a year after NSA is shut down around 2010. Hinkle says those savings are off by as much as \$10 million a year.

"We think it's grossly overstated," Hinkle said.

Working against a Sept. 8 deadline for a final list of base closings to be sent to President Bush, state officials have two main venues to challenge DOD's findings: a July 12 base closure hearing to be held at the National D-Day Museum in the Warehouse District and face-to-face discussions with base closure staff in Washington, D.C.

NSA, which employs about 4,600 people divided between facilities in Algiers and the East Bank, is the national headquarters for the reserves of the Navy and Marine Corps. The DOD published a list May 13 of suggested base closings as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

A **nine-member** BRAC Commission can edit the DOD's list before sending it to President Bush. It takes a simple majority of five commissioners to remove a base from the closure list.

BRAC commissioners are touring bases nationwide to hold regional hearings that allow communities to argue why their bases should remain open.

Louisiana officials say they can save the federal government money if NSA is left open and redeveloped into a Federal City with new buildings leased to the military at below-market rates.

On **June 17**, Sue Ellen **Turner**, one of the BRAC commissioners, toured NSA and listened to the pleas of city and state officials to leave it open.

"I believe that our team made a very powerful presentation," said Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco.

But on the same day of **Turner's** tour, Louisiana officials admitted that much work remains to be done to save NSA, including convincing the DOD that its cost analysis is flawed.

Turner called the Federal City concept "kind of a neat idea" and local officials were "pretty convincing."

They may be even more convincing now. City and state officials did not yet know how much Federal City would save the military compared with the costs it now takes to operate NSA when **Turner** came to town.

Unfortunately, they still don't. City officials said they are still analyzing a voluminous report DOD published on NSA and figuring out how much Federal City will save the military.

Retired Marine Maj. Gen. David Mize, who is heading Mayor C. Ray Nagin's Military Advisory Committee, said one glaring DOD problem is its claims of saving \$19 million in NSA operating costs until a proposed 2010 closure. Obviously, money will have to be spent to keep the base running in between now and 2010, Mize said.

Officials will have figured out how much Federal City will save the military by the July 12 BRAC commission hearing in New Orleans. Finalizing those numbers is the top priority right now, Mize said.

Sen. David Vitter, R-Metairie, said Louisiana would have two hours to sway the full BRAC commission July 12. A handful of nearby states are also expected to attend and make presentations.

The **July hearing** is the most important opportunity for New Orleans to argue its case, since several, if not all, BRAC commissioners will be on site. Retired Marine Col. Dell Dempsey, director of military and defense affairs for the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, said a "super analyst" from Washington, D.C., will be hired for three or four days to crunch data to help NSA stay open.

State officials are perplexed that the DOD wants to close NSA after it ranked on a measure of military value in the top 15 percent of 334 major U.S. administrative headquarters. Military value

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

is supposed to be the key criteria for reviewing bases in BRAC.

But a high ranking doesn't immunize the base from closure, said Ken Beeks, vice president for policy with Business Executives for National Security, a Washington, D.C., organization that supports base closures.

"The rest of the story is how do they do against bases in the same mission area," Beeks said.

Beeks said the military is relocating operations from bases that serve only one purpose and consolidating reserve components with active duty components.

NSA officials do have hope of escaping the list. The Naval Air Station Meridian in Mississippi was on the closure list in 1991, 1993 and 1995. Each time, officials were able to convince the BRAC commission to keep the base alive.

"We are veterans," joked Lamar McDonald, chairman of the Meridian Military Team. "We've always taken the position that this was the finest jet training base in the world."

"It is seriously, a very serious, long, involved process," he said.

Officials hope new data can save 183rd
The State Journal-Register (Springfield, IL.)
June 26, 2005

Most military installations saved from the Pentagon's ax in the last round of base closings in 1995 had one of two attributes: The Defense Department either had overestimated the savings to be realized by closing a base or had underestimated an installation's military value.

In the last three rounds of base closings in 1991, 1993 and 1995, the commission approved 83 percent, 84 percent and 84 percent, respectively, of the closings recommended by the Pentagon.

In 1995, the Pentagon recommended 146 base closures or realignments. The commission removed 23 of those bases from the list (counting four facilities the Pentagon voluntarily removed from the list for various reasons).

"Typically, it's been the case that data comes to light that was not used in the Pentagon's decision," said Paul Taibl, policy director for the non-partisan Business Executives for National Security in Washington, D.C., about why commissioners strike bases from the list. "It's pretty hard to come up with new details, new data."

State and local officials arguing for the 183rd have said the Pentagon's proposal to transfer the 183rd's planes to Fort Wayne International Airport Air Guard Station would actually cost the Pentagon money.

Springfield claims the Pentagon fudged the small savings it would realize by combining the costs and savings of transferring the 183rd's planes along with the realignment of the Hulman Air Guard station in Terre Haute, Ind., to Fort Wayne.

The Pentagon said the realignments will save \$2 million annually starting in 13 years. But to

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

implement the changes, the Pentagon will have to spend \$13.3 million.

"There is no payback - ever - associated with realigning the fighter mission out of Springfield," a written summary of Springfield's arguments against the realignment said. "Without grouping Terre Haute and Fort Wayne into the Capital Airport realignment, there would be no savings at all, and the Air Force would have no justification in its recommendation.

During this year's BRAC process, it has not been unusual for the Air Force to combine cost savings from recommendations involving multiple bases to come up with a total cost savings figure as it did with the Springfield, Fort Wayne and Hufman bases. The Pentagon did this with at least 14 of its Air Force recommendations.

State and local officials have argued that Springfield has been listed by the Pentagon as ranking higher in military value than Fort Wayne and has a similar, if not better, recruiting record. The commissioners have asked for detailed data on the recruiting record of the 183rd, which the city said it will provide.

In the 19 bases saved by the commission in 1995, not once did commissioners cite community support or economic impact as the primary reason for saving the base.

In four cases, the commission said that the Pentagon had made faulty judgments on an installation's military value. In nine cases, the commission found a problem in the Pentagon's computations of cost savings. In most of those nine, commissioners also felt that military value was underestimated as well.

In six cases, the commission said the Pentagon improperly assessed the bases' ability to receive new missions from the shuttered bases. This was because the commission decided to close the two bases set to receive missions from the six bases the Pentagon wanted to shutter.

"The best testimony includes analytical data," 2005 commissioner James Hansen, a former Utah congressman, told reporters in St. Louis last week. "You can expect everyone to get emotional, to talk about how terrible it is. But the fact of the matter is the military has had an awful long time to work on this."

Most of the states and cities testifying at the commission's hearing on Monday alleged problems with the Pentagon's methodology, whether it related to military value or the estimated cost savings.

"I was pleasantly surprised with the ability of communities to give details on how the BRAC process did them wrong," said commissioner Sue Ellen **Turner**, a retired Air Force general. "That gives us something to work with."

But whether the commissioners buy the case of Springfield - or any other city - will hinge on analysis that must be done by the commission's staff over the next several months.

"Anybody who's brought a challenge, we will adjudicate what's right and what's wrong," said commissioner Harold Gehman, a retired admiral. "Our staff will do a detailed analysis."

Hansen added that even in cases where a community does present detailed data "we haven't had

Press Comments Commissioner Newton BRAC 2005

Commissioner Newton said he will travel to Washington at least once more before the BRAC process is completed to present additional data to the commissioners and render a final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 8 to review the Pentagon's suggestions and accept or reject it. Commissioners will take a vote on each of the nine recommendations.

Other folks (from the Pentagon) on the stand... Usually they have a pretty good idea of what they want to do. They will travel to Washington at least once more before the BRAC process is completed to present additional data to the commissioners and render a final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 8 to review the Pentagon's suggestions and accept or reject it. Commissioners will take a vote on each of the nine recommendations.

Mayor Tim Davlin said he will travel to Washington at least once more before the BRAC process is completed to present additional data to the commissioners and render a final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 8 to review the Pentagon's suggestions and accept or reject it. Commissioners will take a vote on each of the nine recommendations.

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SAVING A SUB BASE: '93 OFFERS STRATEGY LESSONS; UNCERTAIN FUTURE IN GROTON

Hartford Courant
May 23, 2005

Sam Gejdenson has a well-honed list of do's and don'ts from the 1993 fight to keep submarines in Groton. keep the statements short and pointed, provide good graphics, don't let politicians ramble.

But he also advises this year's submarine base advocates to remember another lesson. But he also advises this year's submarine base advocates to remember another lesson.

2005 is similar to 1993 in some ways. The Pentagon is again armed with precise, detailed data to back up its argument that the Naval Submarine Base in Groton should be mothballed, and will again allow Connecticut to present its case at a Boston hearing Jul

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

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But there are important differences. This year's proposal is more sweeping and would close the entire base, while in 1993 the Defense Department wanted to move the subs, but expand submarine training in Groton.

There are other major changes: The state lacks a key argument from last time, that Russia and other Cold War rivals are still threats. Closing the sub base is the biggest item on the 2005 agenda of the Commission on Base Realignment and Closure, and therefore a key part of the cost-saving strategy -- a hard argument to overcome. And, most notably, Connecticut lacks the political clout it had a dozen years ago.

"My perception is that the politics are a lot more intense than in '93," said New London City Manager Richard Brown. "The whole idea of red state/blue state and whether we're looking at rewarding or punishing certain areas, depending on their support in the election, seems to be a lot more pronounced."

The state again is cranking up an extensive effort that, at least on paper, should rival the Pentagon for depth of research and expertise. But what probably will matter most is the twist no one can predict.

In 1993, for instance, retired Navy Capt. Frank "Mike" O'Beirne Jr. stole the show at the regional hearing. Supporters recruited him to help the cause after reading a letter he wrote to TheDay newspaper in New London.

"He was right out of central casting," Gejdenson recalled. Sure enough, his colorful presentation "brought the sometimes laconic commission members to life." The Courant reported at the time.

The state got another break, thanks to a chance encounter Gejdenson had had some years earlier, on a Sierra Club trip to Green River. Because of the pouring rain, the party had to keep moving to higher ground -- not a pleasant experience.

One of Gejdenson's companions was Rep. Beverly Byron, D-Md. Though they had served together in Congress for more than a decade, they moved in very different political circles. Now, they had shared this experience for a few days.

When Byron faced the fight of her political life in 1992, Gejdenson went to western Maryland to campaign for her. She lost, and the next year was a member of the base-closing commission.

At a key hearing, the commission gave local officials 45 minutes to present their case. Don't take 50, Gejdenson advised everyone -- the commission has a lot of people to hear from, and you don't want to get a reputation as long-winded.

**Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005**

But when Connecticut got to the end of its 45 minutes, Byron said, "Byron, sit down. We've got plenty of time." Connecticut got an extra hour, and the decision to close the base was overturned.

Local Arguments

The strongest, and most difficult, pitch Connecticut has to make is why its communities deserve to be spared more than any other states facing the Pentagon's cut:

It's essential, Gejdenson said, that "you just don't come in and say this hurts my community. Every BRAC commissioner has heard that from everyone else."

There's a sense among local officials that they are struggling to play catch-up to the Pentagon, which has been studying the bases for years.

John Markowicz, who heads the current Submarine Base Realignment Coalition, said that many of the same people who served on the 1993 panel are serving now, so they do have experience.

On the other hand, William Moore, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Southeastern Connecticut, who headed the coalition in 1993, was concerned that the wait for detailed Pentagon information is dulling any local edge.

"It's outrageous that they make the announcement ... and communities are left swinging in the wind," said Moore, who added, "I believe it's purposeful, to make it harder on the communities to make a cogent argument."

But they'll try, and here's where experts thought Connecticut advocates could make convincing arguments:

Investment in the submarine base. It's easy for the Pentagon to make the argument that by going to the lower-cost South, labor and construction costs will be less, and it will be cheaper to maintain facilities.

"New England costs more money," said Charles Hellman, military policy analyst at the Center for Defense Information, a Washington research group. So far, said political consultant Alex Albert, "this has been a very numbers-driven BRAC."

While the Pentagon estimates closing the base will save \$1.6 billion over the next 20 years, Connecticut will counter with numbers of its own.

The submarine base has recently completed numerous infrastructure improvements. In the last fiscal year, some \$98.5 million in investments were made, and another \$50 million is due this year. Projects have included renovation of barracks and Warehouse B-33 and construction of the new Navy Lodge.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

Displaced workers. Simply moving pieces of the mission to Georgia and Virginia, as the Pentagon proposes, will not mean that much-needed expert workers will follow.

BRAC Commissioner Harold W. Gehman Jr. estimated that 25 to 40 percent of the employees at a closed base usually agree to move, and "obviously there's a loss of skill and continuity," he said.

That raises not only questions about where new skilled workers can be found, but what happens to those left behind.

"Depending on where you are, it may not be easy to find a new job," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Eilen **Turner**, another commission member. "These kinds of questions are important."

Infrastructure. Will Kings Bay or any of the other sites targeted for expansion be ready for a sudden infusion of people?

Commission members asked this question repeatedly, trying to assess whether the Pentagon had adequately consulted with local officials about whether the roads, water supply, housing and sewage systems were ready for the influx.

While Pentagon officials insisted they checked and the new sites would be ready, commissioners had their doubts. Chairman Anthony Principi raised a number of questions about whether the Kings Bay area was ready to handle "a large, large jump in employment ... that's one factor we have to consider."

The way to make the points, said veterans of the 1993 fight, is to offer easy-to-understand figures, try to show New London and Groton are unique and, hard as it may be, remain statesmanlike.

Remember, said Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., "We are pushing for New London. We're not against anyone else."

There is some thought that sentiment could be an important argument: Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vernon Clark was stationed at the base in the late 1960s, and the submarine base has a history dating back to World War I.

Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., warned against making that point too emphatically. "It's somewhat valuable," he said, "but we're not going to base our argument on nostalgia."

Military Values

One of the key differences between 2005 and 1993 could be tougher to overcome: The

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

military mission is far different today.

In 1993, the nation had just won the Cold War, but was still uncertain of where future threats were coming from. Would Russia still be an adversary? What would become of its former satellites?

Today, the chief military threat is not across the Atlantic, but from terrorists and from rogue states such as North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

Arguing otherwise is futile. But Lieberman and Rep. Rob Simmons, R-1st District, also have suggested that Connecticut interests can challenge strategic thinking in other ways.

The state placed 12th among 16 bases in a "military value" score, largely because the Pentagon saw Groton as too one-dimensional.

Advocates of keeping different bases open maintain that consolidating subs. or other kinds of military operations, becomes a homeland security threat because it makes it easier for terrorists to cripple American readiness with one strike.

"What we're seeing is a massive shift of military installations from the North to the South and West. How does that protect our country?" asked Sen. Susan M. Collins, R-Maine.

"How large a base, with lots of real estate, can you accommodate and have it make sense?" Simmons asked. "Use that logic and you'll have one military base" for the whole country.

Lieberman also suggested questioning the Pentagon's plans for the sub fleet. Navy officials said last week that the attack sub fleet should shrink to about 40 -- it's now 54 -- and has been around 100. Lieberman maintained that Norfolk and Kings Bay do not have the capacity to handle subs based in the Atlantic.

Lieberman's staff plans again to use an argument they used last time: that not all naval bases are alike. There is a feeling that the recommendations equate submarines with cruisers, and the staff is likely to point out once again how there's a big difference.

Its biggest problem, though, could be fighting the numbers. The Pentagon is under severe pressure to cut costs, and the \$1.6 billion estimate in savings could not be easily found elsewhere.

The cost of the Iraq mission, said former Connecticut Gov. Lowell P. Weicker, has "gone to the moon, and so they're looking at ways to peel it back."

The X-Factor

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

For all the analyses and charts and terse-talking local officials, what the decision is likely to come down to is some intangible -- a Sierra Club trip, the sentimental ties between the Navy and Groton -- something no one can foresee.

There were strong relationships in 1993 -- Weicker had been a three-term senator and in his third year as governor. "I was lucky," he recalled, "having come out of the Senate, I still knew all the players and could sort of play a dual role of the former senator and the governor."

Dodd and Lieberman were close to President Clinton, and Gejdenson had his new friend, Byron.

But the politicians also warned not to count too much on those personal relationships -- no base commission member wants to look like he's doing someone a favor -- and to make sure the politicians don't overwhelm everyone else in the public hearings.

Lieberman's staff found in 1993 that the way to get heard is to act professionally, presenting the base commission staff with data and reasoned arguments. This is not the time for fancy lunches or bonding.

Any staff member or political figure who has influence is going to have it through relationships built over the years, or in the same way as the local people -- with cold, hard facts.

Former Utah Rep. James V. Hansen, now a commission member, recalled how he helped save that state's Dugway Proving Ground, a biological warfare testing site, in the 1995 base-closing round.

"We flew 'em around and we asked, 'Where else in the lower 48 states can you do this kind of testing?' No one could name another spot," Hansen recalled.

The Pentagon, the story goes, quickly decided Dugway would not be affected.

Opinions/ Editorials

**Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005**

National News Articles

BRAC says Galena closing could save millions a year

Associated Press

July 20, 2005

*Commissioner **Lloyd Newton** asked Tuesday whether the Galena airfield would remain open and available as an alternative landing site for military jets, even if the Air Force contracts go away.*

Put Monmouth in 'mega base,' but don't close it, say NJ officials

Associated Press

July 8, 2005

*"We know that when you take an organization and you want to move the mission, it takes some time, some resources, to rebuild," said commissioner **Lloyd Newton**, a retired Air Force general. "Whether they (the Pentagon) took all the studies and analyses that they needed to do to make sure they could do this without compromising our men and women, that's something we continue to look at."*

Base closing commissioner wraps up visit in Limestone

Associated Press

June 28, 2005

*Afterward, **Newton** said workers were "doing a very, very important job for our Department of Defense, and that comes through very, very loud and clear."*

Civic leaders, civilian workers rally for military payroll jobs

Associated Press

June 23, 2005

*"There is some cost data that may be different, there may be a discrepancy there. The department may not have had all of it," **Newton** told reporters in the lobby of the Celebrezze Federal Building, where the payroll agency occupies 14 floors.*

Fort's fate up in air Mulling post closure, BRAC officials tour Eatontown installation

Asbury Park Press (New Jersey)

June 4, 2005

*"No decisions have been made," **Newton** said. "We work very hard not to come to any decisions while we're here."*

Local News Articles

Language institute a long shot for Utah; BRAC: The commission votes to take a look at new homes for 3 graduate schools run by Pentagon

Salt Lake Tribune

July 20, 2005

*Retired Gen. **Lloyd Newton** expressed reservations that the commission would only look at moving all three facilities to Monterey, "taking it to a high-cost area."
"I don't have a problem in engaging in a process of deciding whether we should combine*

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

these functions. I do have a problem in that, seemingly, we have already decided where these functions should go," he said. "Instead of studying this to see if it should go to Monterey, we should be studying this to see where is the best place for it to go."

**Base-Closing Proposals For Virginia Questioned;
Citing London Attack, Officials Defend Some Facilities On The Block**
Richmond Times Dispatch
July 8, 2005

*Gov. Warner invited commission members to ask questions at the conclusion of the hearing, but none did. Commission member **Lloyd Newton** said afterward that many panel members already had the information in hand, had spoken with Virginia officials and, in some cases, had visited sites.
"If we had questions today, we would have asked them," he said.*

Brac Commissioners Tour Peninsula Bases, But Not Oceana
Virginia Pilot
May 26, 2005

*"We feel no need to really visit Oceana at this point. We don't want to send signals that are not already there," **Newton** said. "It is not on the list; ... if for some reason it was added, then it gives us that opportunity to go and visit."*

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

BRAC says Galena closing could save millions a year
Associated Press
July 20, 2005

A decision by the military base review commission could result in cancellation of the Air Force contracts for snowplowing at the Galena runway and maintenance of other military facilities at the state-run airport.

Commission staff members said Tuesday stopping the contracts could save the military \$11 million a year, and another \$30 million in improvements through 2012.

The Air Force might face some one-time expenses to close out the contract, but over the next six years the estimated total savings could reach \$90 million.

Dropping the contracts would eliminate 2.2 percent of the jobs available in the Galena region, which has about 2,000 people, according to the commission's information.

City manager Marvin Yoder said if the money stops flowing, Galena could lose 25 percent of its jobs.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

"Initially, the impact is going to be devastating," Yoder said.

Bill O'Halloran, regional aviation manager for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities said the Air Force pays the state about \$400,000 annually to give the 7,200-foot runway extra attention.

The commission's decision to consider closing Galena is not final. It means the commission has agreed to look further into the idea as part of the nationwide base closure and realignment process. By law, before the commission takes a final vote at least two commissioners must visit Galena.

Galena, a village of about 700 people 275 miles west of Fairbanks, used to host a small Air Force station and several jets on 24-hour alert. The jets were there to intercept Soviet aircraft that entered U.S. airspace.

That need has diminished in recent years, said Craig Hall, senior analyst with the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Jets haven't been based in Galena, even on alert, for two to three years, Hall said, and the field is now classed as a "forward operating location."

"The security environment has changed and the requirement for FOLs may no longer be valid," Hall said.

Intercept flights now come out of Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage, Hall said.

With the expected arrival of new, faster FA-22s at Elmendorf in 2008, the need for forward bases will be further diminished, Hall said. Whatever role Galena is still fulfilling could be handled by Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, he said. And, he said, that would be true regardless of whether the commission and Congress approve the Defense Department's separate recommendation to remove most aircraft and personnel from Eielson.

The Galena proposal was one of 12 possible closures or realignments suggested by the commission in a July 1 letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The letter asked the department why it hadn't proposed the 12.

In a letter of response, defense officials said ending the contracts and assigning Galena's role to Eielson raised no objections from the North American Aerospace Defense Command or the U.S. Northern Command.

Commissioner **Lloyd Newton** asked Tuesday whether the Galena airfield would remain open and available as an alternative landing site for military jets, even if the Air Force contracts go away.

Hall assured him that it would stay open. He also said the Allen Army Airfield at Fort Greely has been upgraded in recent years for the arrival of national missile defense interceptors. It also can serve as an alternative landing site for fighters.

Put Monmouth in 'mega base,' but don't close it, say NJ officials

Associated Press

July 8, 2005

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

Fort Monmouth should remain open and merge into a Pentagon-recommended "mega base" of three other Garden State military installations, New Jersey officials on Friday told a seemingly receptive federal panel that is considering whether to recommend shuttering the Army post.

"It's certainly what the secretary of defense is trying to accomplish in this transformation to build more jointness into our warfighting capability—readiness and training, research and development," Anthony Principi, chairman of the nine-member Base Realignment and Closure Commission, said after a two-hour hearing.

The Pentagon in May said Fort Monmouth should close and more than 2,000 of its jobs move to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. The Pentagon also recommended merging the Lakehurst Naval Air Station with nearby Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base, creating the nation's only "mega base" of Army, Air Force and Navy installations, since they work together on various projects.

In a presentation to BRAC commissioners, federal lawmakers, retired military officials and local leaders from New Jersey said Fort Monmouth, an Army research and development installation that already works with the other bases, should be included in the merger.

"It would just formalize what already is a reality," said Rep. Rush Holt, D-Pennington, whose district includes Fort Monmouth.

The idea of Fort Monmouth joining the mega base was just one of several key points to which the commissioners seemed receptive after the BRAC regional hearing held at Gloucester College. Another shared worry was that of a so-called "brain drain," which refers to the approximately 80 percent of Fort Monmouth's workers who said they would not relocate to Aberdeen, according to a poll commissioned by a private group working to keep Fort Monmouth open.

All four of the commissioners at the hearing expressed serious reservations about losing such experience in comments they made after the presentations from New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware officials.

"We know that when you take an organization and you want to move the mission, it takes some time, some resources, to rebuild," said commissioner Lloyd Newton, a retired Air Force general. "Whether they (the Pentagon) took all the studies and analyses that they needed to do to make sure they could do this without compromising our men and women, that's something we continue to look at."

Paul Gaffney, chairman of the Governor's Commission to Support and Enhance New Jersey's Military and Coast Guard Installations, said it would take 10 years before Aberdeen's workforce would be at the same skill level of today's Fort Monmouth employees.

Commissioner Philip Coyle, a former assistant defense secretary in the Clinton administration, praised the New Jersey group for including in its presentation how many employees did move from one military installation to another in past BRAC rounds. The number of people who did make the move was always relatively small, around 16 to 20 percent.

The New Jersey group also said the Pentagon's estimated one-time cost of \$22 million to close

**Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005**

Fort Monmouth and move jobs to Aberdeen would cost two or three times as much because the Maryland post does not have the facilities to house Fort Monmouth's equipment.

The BRAC commissioners and their staff would analyze

Principi said after the hearing that the BRAC commissioners and their staff would analyze carefully all the financial data.

"This is not just about saving money, it's about national security, so dollars can be saved and used for modernization to ensure troops have enough equipment," Principi said.

Rep. Frank Pallone, D-Long Branch, said he was heartened that the commissioners "seem to be thinking the same way we are."

The New Jersey group also asked the commissioners not to retire F-16 planes.

Another Pentagon recommendation is to retire the 108th Air Refueling Wing at McGuire Air Force Base, another Pentagon recommendation.

The 1988 and 1993 base closings provide for major reductions in its work force, but the post was kept open.

The Pentagon targeted Fort Monmouth in the 1988 and 1993 base closings provide for major reductions in its work force, but the post was kept open.

A majority of the nine BRAC commissioners can vote to take a installation off the closure list it will send to President Bush in September. Bush can only accept or deny the entire package.

The BRAC commissioners, the administration, the administration's final within submitted by the commission. If Bush accepts the recommendations, the administration will submit a revised 45 legislative days, unless Congress passes a joint resolution to block the recommendations.

If the president rejects the recommendations, the commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revised list. In November, Bush would have to approve or disapprove the revised recommendations.

Base closing commissioner wraps up visit in Lanestone
Associated Press
June 28, 2005

A member of the base closing commission had words of praise for workers at the Defense Finance Accounting Service center on Tuesday but he offered no assurances that the Pentagon's plan to close the facility will be overturned.

About 100 to 200 DFAS supporters wearing bright yellow T-shirts lined the road leading to the facility as retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton arrived shortly after 10 a.m. for a tour, a briefing and a meeting with employees.

Joining Newton at the facility at the former Loring Air Force Base hospital were Gov. John Baldacci and U.S. Rep. Michael Michaud.

Afterward, Newton said workers were "doing a very, very important job for our Department of Defense, and that comes through very, very loud and clear."

But he said he could make no promises to the 350 workers other than to say that the full Base Realignment and Closure Commission would evaluate the Pentagon's proposals and make an independent recommendation on which, if any, DFAS centers should be eliminated to save money.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

The Pentagon currently has 26 DFAS centers across the country, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wants to reduce that number to three.

The Grow DFAS Committee is pushing to expand the Limestone facility. Its co-chairman, Carl Flora, who serves as president of the Loring Development Authority, said the Defense Department gave the Limestone location low marks because it's not in an urban area with access to a large pool of potential workers.

But Flora said there are plenty of people in northern Maine who would be happy to work at the center, where the average salary is \$33,000.

In fact, there's so much demand for the jobs that it takes only 9.2 days on average for the DFAS Limestone to fill a job vacancy, which is fastest time in the entire defense accounting system. The center in Alexandria, Va., for example, takes 44 days to fill a job, and the center in Kansas City takes 133 days.

The DFAS center was established more than a decade ago to ease the impact of the shutdown of Loring Air Force Base during an earlier round of base closings. Loring's closure eliminated 4,500 military jobs and 1,100 civilian jobs.

The center was the last Maine site to be visited by a BRAC commissioner in advance of the panel's July 6 hearing in Boston that will focus on New England bases that are targeted for closure or realignment.

Commissioners have already visited Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which would be shut down under the Pentagon plan, and Brunswick Naval Air Station, which would remain open but lose all its aircraft and half of its military personnel.

The panel has a Sept. 8 deadline to come up with its own list of recommendations and present it to President Bush, who then has the options of accepting it in its entirety, negotiating it or asking the commission for revisions.

Civic leaders, civilian workers rally for military payroll jobs

Associated Press

June 23, 2005

A member of the Pentagon's base-closing commission got a firsthand look at the city's military payroll office on Thursday and offered a sliver of hope to civic leaders and employees trying to save its 1,000 jobs.

Retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd **Newton** told the skyscraper home of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service with Gov. Bob Taft and hometown members of Congress. He said he would forward what he had learned to fellow commission members.

"There is some cost data that may be different, there may be a discrepancy there. The department may not have had all of it," **Newton** told reporters in the lobby of the Celebrezze Federal Building, where the payroll agency occupies 14 floors.

Newton declined to specify what cost-saving considerations he had learned from politicians trying

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

to preserve the jobs have focused on a proposal to reduce agency rent by constructing a new office building for DFAS.

U.S. Reps. Dennis Kucinich, Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Steven LaFourette have complained that the higher rent charged DFAS in Cleveland by the federal General Services Administration has put the jobs at a disadvantage compared to other cities that also have DFAS jobs.

The base-closing commission plans a hearing Monday in Buffalo, N.Y., to consider appeals from the region challenging recommended base closings and consolidations.

The Department of Defense wants to combine DFAS payroll and accounting work in Indianapolis, Denver and Columbus, Ohio.

Under the base closing plan, Ohio stands to lose 1,000 jobs at an Air National Guard Base in Mansfield and 50 at the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. Overall, Ohio would gain about 241 additional jobs, including 1,758 at the Defense Supply Center in Columbus and suburban Whitehall and 494 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton.

Newton acknowledged that sentiment around the country to preserve hometown jobs made it difficult to consider closing military bases or facilities, but he said the commission was determined to focus on the well-being of the nation's military.

"We need to find every way we possibly can to insure that every dollar that is being spent is being spent for the absolute need of our men and women in uniform," **Newton** said.

"The more I go and visit a location, the more difficult my job becomes," he said.

After **Newton's** tour, Mayor Jane Campbell and other elected officials made the city's pitch for the jobs at a rally at a downtown park overlooking Lake Erie.

DFAS employees wearing green "Keep Cleveland DFAS" T-Shirts mentioned a common concern: they do good work and don't want their jobs shifted elsewhere.

"The agency needs to stay in Cleveland," said Vanessa Lawson, 47, a 27-year DFAS veteran from Cleveland Heights. "We're good. If you go by the quality of work, it's the best."

Lawson, heading off for a free hot dog lunch offered to rally participants, said the city's poverty rate, the worst among the nation's big cities, was an additional reason Cleveland shouldn't lose the DFAS jobs.

Tamara Davis, 49, of Cleveland, who works in a Social Security Administration office in the same building, said she has been impressed by the professionalism of the DFAS staff, which prepares military payroll and retirement checks.

"People need jobs. Their professionalism is real good," she said.

Fort's fate up in air Mulling post closure, BRAC officials tour Eatontown installation
Asbury Park Press (New Jersey)
June 4, 2005

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

EATONTOWN - The head of a federal commission considering the closure of Fort Monmouth said Friday that a tour of the post raised questions about the Pentagon's recommendation to close the Army installation.

"I think our job has become more difficult," said Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. "I think we have a better understanding of Fort Monmouth. A lot of questions were raised in our own minds."

That's exactly what supporters hoped to hear.

"I don't think we could have had a better day," said Frank Muzzi, a defense contractor and member of the Patriots Alliance, a lobbying group formed to keep Fort Monmouth open. "I think the message got through."

But neither Principi nor Retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton, another BRAC commissioner who toured the post, would say whether the visit would scuttle last month's Pentagon recommendation to close the fort.

"No decisions have been made," Newton said. "We work very hard not to come to any decisions while we're here."

Fort Monmouth, with 5,552 civilian and military employees, is the largest Army post among the 33 major military installations to be recommended for closure by the Pentagon in a cost-cutting measure. The only installation in New Jersey slated for closure, the fort estimates it is responsible for 22,774 jobs statewide and pumping \$3.24 billion a year into the state's economy.

Under the Pentagon's plan, Fort Monmouth would be eliminated and its work as a research center for communications, surveillance and reconnaissance systems would be transferred largely to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

That decision was attacked almost immediately by the entire New Jersey congressional delegation, as well as state, county and municipal leaders as flawed, unnecessary and expensive.

Those leaders, along with about 150 local merchants, fort employees and other fort supporters staged a rally despite a persistent rain early Friday morning in front of the fort's main entrance on Route 35, demanding that the area's largest employer stay open.

"We dare not, dare not allow the work at Fort Monmouth to be interrupted," said U.S. Rep. Rush D. Holt, D-N.J., who along with Rep. Frank J. Padlone Jr. co-chairs the Save Our Fort Committee, a group dedicated to keeping the fort open. "Soldiers in the field depend daily on the work here by the men and women of New Jersey."

Holt was one of a battalion of elected leaders who addressed the crowd of mourners huddled under umbrellas Friday morning.

Touting the economic benefits of Fort Monmouth and its contribution to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan also were U.S. Sen. Jon Corzine, D-N.J., state Senator Ellen Kamber, D-Monmouth, Assemblymen Sean Kean, R-Monmouth, and Michael Panter, D-Monmouth. Freeholder Ted

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

Narozanick, and the mayors of Eatontown, Hightstown, Shrewsbury and Oceanport.

Supporters argue that only about 20 percent of the post's highly-skilled work force would transfer to Maryland if Fort Monmouth is closed.

Calling that a "brain-drain" that would be difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate, and a move that would hurt soldiers who depend on the technology developed at the fort, officials called on the BRAC commissioners to scuttle the Pentagon's plans.

During an afternoon press conference Principi said the BRAC commission would "carefully look at the percentage of people who would move" to Aberdeen.

"At a time of war, we need to look at that very carefully," he said.

Jim Snodgrass, a Morganville resident and a civilian engineer and computer network designer, said he would be hard-pressed to move from New Jersey if the fort closed.

Snodgrass, the father of three young children, said although he has not completely ruled out moving should the fort close, it would be a last resort.

"This was the last move I was going to make," said Snodgrass, 34, who moved from Ohio to New Jersey when he took his post at the fort a decade ago. "My wife is my first love. New Jersey is my second."

James McMurray, of Ocean Township, was more adamant.

"I'm not going anywhere," said McMurray, 65, an engineer working for a defense contractor at the base. He said that rather than move from the fort where he has worked for 21 years, he would consider retiring.

But he expressed concern over the younger engineers and contractors who would not move if the post was closed.

"You've got a lot of built up expertise here that's just going to go away," McMurray said.

The Pentagon's list, while not final, outlines the most sweeping changes to its network of military bases in modern history. In addition to shuttering 33 major facilities in 22 states, it would reconfigure hundreds of others.

But the nine-member BRAC Commission will review those recommendations and has until early September to make revisions before submitting its own recommendations to the president. Commissions in the previous four rounds of base closures - which date back to the 1980s - have endorsed about 85 percent of the Pentagon's recommendations. If President Bush accepts the recommendations, the list becomes final within 45 legislative days, unless Congress passes a joint resolution to block the entire package.

If the president rejects the recommendations, the commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revised list. In November, Bush would have to approve or disapprove the revised recommendations.

Press Comments Commissioner Newton BRAC 2005

Visits to bases targeted by the Pentagon are part of that review process. It also allows supporters the opportunity to make the case for reversing the Pentagon's decision.

Acting Gov. Codey and other elected officials joined Principi and Newton for a lunch meeting following the commissioners' tour where the pair visited several child-care facilities.

Calling the fort a "center of excellence" that contributed to the war effort in Iraq, Codey blasted the Pentagon's decision to close the fort as the "wrong idea at the wrong time," while praising the BRAC commissioners for conducting an "open process" that includes input from those affected by their decisions.

Following the press conference, officials were cautiously optimistic about getting the message across about the importance of the fort.

"Anytime you're put on a BRAC list, it's an uphill battle," Hoyt said. "But that doesn't rage."

"Clearly we're getting the point across," Pallone said. "I think we made progress today."

"We can be assured that the two commissioners who came here today came to do an honest assessment," said Rep. Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J. "In the end, I believe Fort Monmouth will be saved."

Local News Articles

Language institute a long shot for Utah: BRAC: The commission voted to take a look at new homes for 3 graduate schools run by Pentagon

Salt Lake Tribune
July 20, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted Tuesday to take another look at the future of the Defense Language Institute in California, but Utah's military advocates say bringing the coveted school to the state may be a long shot.

The commission voted 8-0 to take a broad look at identifying the best situation for three Pentagon-run graduate schools -- the language institute and Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., and the Air Force Institute of Technology in Ohio.

Vicki McCall, president of the Utah Defense Alliance, said "there was so much ambiguity" in the commission's discussion that it is hard to call what they will consider. "Even the commissioners are not really sure what this means right now," she said.

But she said her impression from talks with commissioners, including former Utah Rep. Jim Hansen, is that they are looking at leaving them unchanged or combining them into schools at one location, which probably would rule out Utah.

"It's a stretch to think we're going to get it, but I would not deny there's an opportunity, because now it's being discussed for closure," McCall said, but her sense is the commission is not looking to relocate the language institute.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

The state has long had its eye on the school located on the California coast south of San Francisco, and there has been discussion of moving the facility since 1991, mainly because of the expense in keeping it where it is.

In 1994, the state submitted a proposal to the Army to move the language school to Hill Air Force Base and partner it with Brigham Young University's nationally renowned language program.

Utah's bid was taken seriously at the time, but any plans to relocate the language institute were scuttled through a combination of some financial incentives offered by the city of Monterey, and opposition from President Clinton's chief of staff Leon Panetta, who had represented Monterey in Congress.

The Defense Language Institute employs about 1,300 civilian workers, including 800 faculty. It offers courses in about 25 different languages to 3,000 students annually from each branch of the service.

Utah officials continue to believe the state would be a good fit for the school because of the language programs at the state's universities and the large number of returned LDS missionaries who are bilingual.

In this round, the Pentagon did not recommend any changes to the three graduate schools in its closure and realignment list released in May, but the commission revived the proposal for changes by including it on its list.

Retired Gen. **Lloyd Newton** expressed reservations that the commission would only look at moving all three facilities to Monterey, "taking it to a high-cost area."

"I don't have a problem in engaging in a process of deciding whether we should combine these functions. I do have a problem in that, seemingly, we have already decided where these functions should go," he said. "Instead of studying this to see if it should go to Monterey, we should be studying this to see where is the best place for it to go."

That sentiment was supported by other commissioners and the staff. "We don't want to preclude any options here. We want to look at the best option," said retired Admiral **Donald Gehman, Jr.**

The commission will hear from the communities that could be affected by changes to the schools and will vote Aug. 22 on any final action. It would take votes from seven of the nine commissioners to close or realign any of the facilities.

Base-Closing Proposals For Virginia Questioned:
Citing London Attack, Officials Defend Some Facilities On The Block
Richmond Times Dispatch
July 8, 2005

U.S. Sen. John W. Warner, mindful of yesterday's terrorist attack in London, Thursday criticized a Defense Department proposal to protect more than 20,000 federal workers by moving their jobs from areas surrounding the Pentagon while other workers and residents remain vulnerable.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

"We don't value one life or limb of a public servant over and above that of the private sector. We're all in this thing together," the Republican senator told reporters after a Base Closure and Realignment Commission hearing yesterday in Arlington.

The department wants to move jobs from leased space in Arlington and its surroundings to save money, asserting it is generally more expensive to lease space than own it.

Most of the space does not meet anti-terrorism protection standards requiring Department of Defense offices to be set back 82 feet from the nearest curb, and much of the space is near Metro subway stations.

During the hearing, Warner told the commission that he believes Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld did not adhere to congressional law governing the base-closure process when Rumsfeld recommended shifting jobs from Arlington to other parts of Northern Virginia and to other states.

'Law was not followed'

"I must respectfully tell you that the law was not followed," said Warner, who helped draft the provisions. "I cannot recall in my 17 years of agency work with the BRAC process when installations within a specific region were targeted by the Department of Defense for specific scrutiny and recommendations for realignment or closure."

Warner testified before BRAC commissioners under oath, along with Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner, a Democrat, U.S. Sen. George Allen, R-Va., other members of congress and local officials.

The trio of top elected leaders primarily pressed their case to preserve jobs in Arlington, keep open Fort Monroe in Hampton, which Pentagon officials have targeted for closure, and undo plans to shift some operations from Fort Eustis in Newport News and the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Dahlgren in King George County.

They also expressed concern over the commission's inquiry last week into why the department did not recommend moving the Navy flight squadron at Oceana in Virginia Beach to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia.

Virginia, which has 31 major military installations and employs more than 350,000 military and civilian defense workers, faces a net job loss of 15,744 under the Pentagon recommendations.

Two sites identified

Jay Fisette, chairman of the Arlington County Board of Supervisors, said sending jobs out of that locality, even if to other Northern Virginia sites such as Fort Belvoir or Marine Corps Base Quantico, would send the wrong message to terrorists.

"It would be the ultimate win for the terrorists," he told commissioners.

Arlington officials have identified two sites within the county that they say would offer increased security for federal workers at a lower cost than moving employees elsewhere.

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

Allen said shifting jobs too far would disrupt an "extraordinary synergy" that has resulted from the military, technology and science communities working in close proximity to one another and the Pentagon.

"We ought to be tearing down barriers" rather than creating obstacles to such cooperation, he testified.

The Virginia delegation said a number of defense department recommendations are based on flawed data.

For example, Allen said, the cost of environmental and other cleanup at Fort Monroe could top \$1 billion, or four times earlier estimates and easily offset estimated savings.

Hampton Mayor Ross A. Kearney II cautioned that Fort Monroe also might include the site of slave and Indian burial grounds, and that the Catholic Church could lay claim to some land if ownership were to revert from the federal government to the state.

A September deadline

"I don't think the United States government wants to take on Pope Benedict," he said to laughter.

Gov. Warner said Oceana has ample room for current and future air operations. Allen added that it is "not a unique or unusual situation" for a landing site such as Oceana to face encroachment by development.

The commission must make its final recommendations to President Bush by early September. Adding a site, such as Oceana, to the defense department's recommended list of closures or realignments would require the vote of seven of the panel's nine members.

Gov. Warner invited commission members to ask questions at the conclusion of the hearing, but none did. Commission member **Lloyd Newton** said afterward that many panel members already had the information in hand, had spoken with Virginia officials and, in some cases, had visited sites.

"If we had questions today, we would have asked them," he said.

BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi told reporters that "serious encroachment issues" exist at Oceana. Later, speaking to colleagues in an elevator, he said Fort Monroe is a "beautiful piece of property" that is ripe for development.

As the meeting closed, Sen. Warner urged commission members to deliberate carefully.

"We awakened this morning to learn how fragile life is wherever in the world terrorists wish to destroy," he said. "This is a nation at war. I say to you most fervently, we cannot make any missteps."

Brac Commissioners Tour Peninsula Bases, But Not Oceana

Virginia Pilot

May 26, 2005

**Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005**

HAMPTON -- Their first-day itinerary included a local naval hospital and shipyard, then lunch and a "windshield tour" of the world's largest Navy base. On day two Wednesday, they ate breakfast at historic Fort Monroe before visiting Fort Eustis.

But what Anthony Principi and Lloyd Newton did today during their mid-week field trip to Hampton Roads might be just as significant. The two commissioners who will help decide the future of the nation's military bases stayed away from Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach.

The Navy's biggest East Coast jet base escaped major changes in Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's May 13 recommendations for closing and realigning military

facilities. But during hearings last week in Washington, one of the nine approval commissioners -- retired Army general James T. Hill -- said he was surprised that Oceana wasn't slated for closure because of the residential and commercial development that has grown up around it.

Principi, chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, and Newton, a retired Air Force general, said Wednesday that it was premature to think about adding Oceana to the list, a move that would require the support of senior members.

Principi said there was "very, very significant encroachment at Oceana," but no decision has been made whether "to even consider" recommending the base for closure.

"We feel no need to really visit Oceana at this point. We don't want to send signals that are not already there," Newton said. "It is not on the list... if for some reason it was added, then it gives us that opportunity to go and visit."

That's not the case at Fort Monroe in Hampton, a 180-year-old Army post that would be proposed closing. The base's main tenant, headquarters of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, would shift to Fort Eustis in Newport News. Eustis' mission would be changed significantly, with 2,100 positions sent elsewhere.

At a news conference Wednesday, the pair said they were committed to making sure that Rumsfeld's recommendations were supported by solid data on bases' military value, the cost of environmental clean-up and the economic effect on communities.

"I can assure you we're not a rubber stamp," Principi said. "We are independent. We're going to do our own comprehensive assessments."

Members of the commission will visit at least 70 bases across the country during the next two months and will hold 16 public hearings. Commissioners have until Sept. 8 to submit recommendations for closure and realignment to President Bush.

Principi and Newton said Wednesday that their meetings with the commanders of Norfolk Naval Station and Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth seemed to indicate that those facilities could handle the influx of a combined 4,800 jobs.

Rumsfeld's plan to shut down a naval shipyard in Kennebunk, Maine, would bring more than 1,700

Press Comments
Commissioner Newton
BRAC 2005

civilian jobs to the local yard; the recommendation to shutter New London Submarine Base in Connecticut would result in another 2,800 positions shifting to Norfolk.

"Indeed, there's a lot of congestion in Norfolk, but it seems to me, preliminarily, that they do have the capacity, the pier space," Principi said of Norfolk Naval Station.

Principi said they learned that the shipyard would require some construction to make it ready to accept a submarine maintenance depot from New England.

Next week, Principi and **Newton** -- along with one or two other commissioners, the chairman said -- will visit Maine and Connecticut to learn about the places the jobs would come from. Communities and legislators in New England are promising a big fight to keep their facilities open.

Hampton Mayor Ross Kearney II said he was pleased that the commission was open to hearing about alternatives to closure. The city has proposed building an office complex on the base, then leasing the space back to the military. Principi said similar arrangements have come out of past base-closure rounds.

"I don't think they came here with their minds made up," Kearney said.

Opinions/ Editorials

**Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005**

National News Articles

National Guard leaders offer plan that would affect fewer air bases

Gannett News Service

July 24 2005

*At a hearing this week on some of the Pentagon's proposals, retired Admiral Harold **Gehman** and other commissioners stepped up criticism of the Air National Guard proposal.*

***Gehman** accused the Air Force of "substantially deviating" from the laws governing the base realignment process and of making errors in assessing the military value of those units.*

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily & Defense Report

July 20, 2005

"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.

Air Force Might Keep Bases Open After Personnel Moves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

*Harold **Gehman**, a commissioner and a retired Navy admiral, called the Air National Guard proposals "unworkable and unsatisfactory."*

And, he said, "It would be easy for us to throw this back to the Defense Department, but that would be irresponsible for us to do that, so we need some help."

Missouri lawmakers make case to keep military bases open

Associated Press

July 21, 2005

*The commission will make recommendations to President Bush by September. Chairman Harold **Gehman** Jr., a retired Navy admiral and former NATO supreme allied commander, called the process a "reality check ... devoid of politics."*

BRAC commissioners appear impressed by Battle Creek arguments

Gannett News Service

June 21, 2005

*"The Michigan delegation had good facts and were challenging the specifics of the military value equation," said Harold **Gehman**, a member of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission that is reviewing the Pentagon's recommended military base closures and will come up with a final list by Sept. 8.*

*"They gave us homework to do," **Gehman** said in reference to the Michigan delegation. He spoke to reporters at the end of a daylong hearing held by three of the nine BRAC commissioners on proposed closures and restructurings in seven Midwestern states.*

BRAC member says DOD needs to give specifics on recommendations

Associated Press

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

May 26, 2006

*Retired Admiral Harold **Gehman** said the Pentagon believes shifting the Maxwell program and others to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts will provide "a better product."*

"Now they have to demonstrate that to us, because the cost of doing it is relatively high," he said.

***Gehman** said the computer systems management done at Maxwell-Gunter "is critical to the national security of the country."*

He said there is a set of eight criteria the commission uses to make its recommendation - the first four entail military significance. Economic impact to base communities, while important, is the last issue considered.

"Yes we will consider the economics of the situation, but it's pretty far down on the list," he said.

He said the visits are not for fact-finding, but used to supplement the data supplied by the DOD. The commission members' observations on Maxwell-Gunter will be discussed publicly at a BRAC regional hearing June 30 in Atlanta.

BRAC commissioner praise selection process, set to go on the road

Copley News Service

May 19, 2005

Asked if the commission might add any bases to the Pentagon's list for possible closure,

***Gehman** said, "I think that would be an outcome of the public hearings with the communities." If a community representative "brings up a legitimate issue," and challenges the Defense Department numbers on military value, "we would have to go back and compare the numbers."*

Local News Articles

Officials See Hope In BRAC Criticisms

Scripps News Service

July 18, 2005

*Another commissioner, retired Adm. Harold **Gehman**, said, "It appears that you have inconsistently applied military value to your decisions. It appears to violate several standing regulations and laws. And it appears to have several hidden policy issues embedded in it.*

*"It would be easy for us to just throw the whole thing back to the Department of Defense for those reasons," **Gehman** said, but that would be "irresponsible." "Therefore, we need some help on how to proceed from here."*

BRAC: Safe at home base; Commission vote keeps Grand Forks Air Force Base off Pentagon closure list

Grand Forks Herald

July 20, 2005

*However, one commission member, Admiral Harold **Gehman**, questioned the accounting of cost savings and said that with all factors considered, it appeared to save "zero." After a BRAC staff member outlined comparisons of Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, S.D. with Grand Forks, Commissioner Gehman argued Grand Forks should be added to the closure list to give the commission a better chance to compare it "apples to apples," with Ellsworth.*

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

"It seems to me the only way we can compare is by treating both bases the same," he said. "Close them both and sort this out."

Language institute a long shot for Utah; BRAC: The commission votes to take a look at new homes for 3 graduate schools run by Pentagon

Salt Lake Tribune

July 20, 2005

That sentiment was supported by other commissioners and the staff. "We don't want to preclude any options here. We want to look at the best option," said retired Admiral Harold Gehman, Jr.

Officials hope new data can save 183rd

The State Journal-Register

June 26, 2005

Gehman, a retired admiral, said later that the Alabama delegation's claim that the secretary of defense didn't follow the law caught his attention.

"I wouldn't comment on how that deliberation is going to turn out in the end," Gehman said. "But when a delegation makes that allegation, they're going right to the jugular."

A bold, bad BRAC bid; A bidding war among states is no way to keep imperiled military installations

Fort Wayne News Sentinel

June 22, 2005

To the credit of this year's BRAC group, such offers appear not to be making much headway. The Springfield Journal-Register reported Tuesday that BRAC Commissioner Harold Gehman, a retired Navy admiral, said other states have offered incentives to keep bases. But the BRAC process requires its commissioners to look at bases as they were at the end of 2004.

"I would guess IOUs and promises are going to be viewed very well," Gehman told the Springfield newspaper.

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

National Guard leaders offer plan that would affect fewer air bases

Gannett News Service

July 24 2005

WASHINGTON -- State National Guard leaders trying to save dozens of Air National Guard units from closing or losing planes met Friday to craft an alternative plan expected to affect fewer bases.

The nation's adjutants general -- the commanders of the National Guard in every state -- will give

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

the Base Realignment and Closure Commission their plan early next week, said Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke of Nebraska, president of Adjutants General Association of the United States.

"The commission asked us to provide an alternative to the Air Force plans and we will honor that request in the days ahead," Lempke said.

The effort to derail the Pentagon's recommendation to move aircraft or shut down 29 Air National Guard units is gaining momentum from the political firestorm the Pentagon's plan ignited among state officials, members of Congress and the politically powerful National Guard Association.

Lempke said the adjutants general would "fine-tune" the proposal over the weekend. It was drafted in response to requests from members of the commission who asked the adjutants for help in considering an alternative to the Pentagon's proposal.

The BRAC commissioners are reviewing the Pentagon's base closure recommendations and must give a final list to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Unlike the Pentagon's plans for the Air National Guard, the adjutants' recommendations do not single out any air guard units for mission realignment, Lempke said. He declined to disclose many details of the proposal, but said it probably would include one of the Pentagon's suggestions -- that aging Air Guard planes should be retired.

The Pentagon said overhaul of the Air National Guard is needed to strengthen homeland security in vulnerable communities and boost the Air Force's fighting ability.

But political opposition to the Pentagon's air guard plan was sparked the day it was disclosed as part of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's base closing and realignment recommendations May 13.

Opponents say the plan leaves many governors with less military help during emergencies and would hurt the National Guard's ability to recruit and retain members.

Officials in Pennsylvania and Illinois have sued Rumsfeld over the proposal, saying the move would violate federal law that places the National Guard under state authority until a unit is called up for active duty. A lawyer for the base closing commission also said the move would violate the law.

On Friday, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm wrote Rumsfeld that she would "not consent to the deactivation, relocation or withdrawal" of one air guard unit in her state or the Pentagon's proposed retirement of another.

"These recommendations appear to be the result of a seriously flawed process that has completely overlooked the important role of the state with regard to Air National Guard units," Granholm said.

On Wednesday, key members of the House Armed Services Committee blasted the plan.

"I think the Air Force runs a real risk of damaging the historically good relations it has enjoyed

Press Comments Commissioner Gehman BRAC 2005

D-Mo.

with its reserve partners," said Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo.

The base closing commissioners also have been critical.

At a hearing this week on some of the Pentagon's proposals, retired Admiral Harold Gehman and other commissioners stepped up criticism of the Air National Guard proposal.

Gehman accused the Air Force of "substantially deviating" from the laws governing the base realignment process and of making errors in assessing the military value of base units.

A finding that the Pentagon has "substantially deviated" from its base closing criteria in making a recommendation would allow the panel to strike it from the commissioner's final base closure list.

"What we've been hearing from the commissioners certainly makes us hopeful," said John Goheen, spokesman for the National Guard Association.

Also this week, commission Chairman Anthony Principi said the Air Force was "creating a long-term problem" in recruiting by taking aircraft and missions away from local units.

But Principi said rejecting all of the Pentagon's recent recommendations "would be irresponsible" and urged Pentagon officials to work with governors and the adjutants general to develop "a solution that serves the best interests of national security and the country."

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 north eastern United States and for its surge capabilities.

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily & Defense Report

July 20, 2005

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 Quonset Point because it would eliminate excess capacity but still satisfy Defense Department desires in high military capability in the Pacific, a BRAC Commission aide said July 19 (DAILY, May 2005).

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-declared "excess shipbuilding capacity."

"We need to determine, is there excess capacity or not? It's not clear to me right now

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

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.

Panel has reservations about parts of base-closing proposal

Associated Press

July 19, 2005

The base-closing commission expressed deep reservations Monday about parts of the Pentagon's proposal to restructure domestic military bases, including its plan to disband or move dozens of Air National Guard units.

Commission members challenged the legality and homeland security impact of closing down the Air Guard units, which include Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. And at least one panel member said that since it would be irresponsible to just throw out the proposal, the Defense Department should provide additional guidance.

The sharp questioning from the members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission encouraged Massachusetts officials who have been battling the proposal to shut down Otis.

"It was gratifying to hear the commission articulate so many of the arguments that we've been making over the last few weeks," said Steve Schwabron, spokesman for Rep. William Delahunt, D-Mass.

He said the panel members correctly zeroed in on whether the Pentagon is trying to use the BRAC process to do a restructuring among the Air Guard that it would otherwise not be able to do.

Harold **Gehman**, a commissioner and a retired Navy admiral, called the Air National Guard proposals "unworkable and unsatisfactory."

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

And, he said, "It would be easy for us to throw this back to the Defense Department, but that would be irresponsible for us to do that, so we need some help."

On the eve of a vote by the commission on whether to add about a dozen facilities to those the Defense Department has proposed closing or shrinking, panel members questioned why several were left off the list. These included the Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego.

The skepticism exhibited by members of the independent commission at a hearing was an indication that they won't rubber-stamp Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's proposal as some in Congress had feared.

In May, Rumsfeld proposed closing or reducing forces at 62 major bases and hundreds of smaller installations to save money and streamline the services.

Commission Chairman Anthony Principi has pledged to analyze the list independently and make changes if needed before sending it to President Bush for approval this fall.

"We want to make sure the best possible closure or realignment choices are made," Principi said. "It is not our intent to disrupt or to unreasonably target communities that may have breathed a sigh of relief in May when the secretary's list of recommendations was released, or to further burden communities already facing losses."

After voting Tuesday on whether to add certain bases to the Pentagon's list, the nine-member commission will conduct public hearings, visit the sites and collect data to make direct comparisons with bases that perform similar missions and are slated for closure.

It takes votes from seven of nine commission members to add a base to the list on Tuesday. The commission then will have to reaffirm that decision in August, with seven of nine votes. Other bases on the Pentagon's list can be removed at that time by five of nine votes.

For their part, defense officials who testified Monday discouraged changes to Rumsfeld's list of proposed closures and consolidations.

Michael Wynne, the Pentagon's technology and weapons-buying chief who oversaw the base restructuring project, said, "While the department stands behind its recommendations, it fully supports the commission and analysis of alternatives."

However, Wynne then reiterated Rumsfeld's contention that changing the fate of even one base could disrupt other aspects of the "comprehensive, integrated and interdependent" package of recommendations.

Commissioners appeared unlikely to heed that warning.

Nearly every commissioner questioned the Pentagon's proposal to scrap or thin roughly 30 Air National Guard units by taking away the planes or the missions. By law, governors, through their adjutants general, command Guard forces during statewide emergencies like crop disturbances, floods, hurricanes or forest fires.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

State officials complain that Rumsfeld can't legally move the units without the governors' consent, and Pennsylvania officials have filed a lawsuit over the issue. The Justice Department is reviewing the matter, and defense officials have asked the commission to hold off on changing Rumsfeld's Air National Guard recommendations until that ruling.

Commissioner Philip Coyle, a former assistant secretary of defense, said of the recommendations, "They produce very little savings."

Several others, including Principi, questioned whether Rumsfeld's recommendations would hamper homeland security duties or create recruiting problems.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said state officials are working with the Massachusetts National Guard to insure the proposal is based on Utah's military value and the national security concerns, "and is not just a politically expedient solution. Evidenced today, these are clearly the Commission's concerns and we share them."

Defense officials said the benefits of consolidating the Guard units to achieve a more cohesive force outweigh the drawbacks.

Commission members also questioned the Pentagon's decision to close the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, instead of the Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, given Portsmouth's reputation for quickly repairing submarines.

Defense officials said a Pacific-based shipyard is essential and that the two yards perform slightly different functions.

Commissioners also questioned decisions to scale back drastically operations, rather than close, the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine, Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, and Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Revertica In Guard, Reserves
National Journal's CongressDaily
May 17, 2005

Members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission are reacting today that Pentagon recommendations to keep open drastically stripped-down Air Force bases could devastate local economies. If the military does not technically shutter the facilities, the bases would be a "drain on host communities," blocking them from redeveloping the land for commercial purposes. BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said during a public hearing today. The military would have to spend Defense dollars "just to keep [the bases] warm," he added. Former Army Gen. James Hill likewise noted that it might be "better for these communities to close so [they] can begin to retool it, make something out of it."

Top service officials responded that several of the scaled-down facilities, including Alaska's Eielson Air Force Base and North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base, would remain up and running largely for tests and training exercises, despite the loss of thousands of military and civilian personnel. The 5,500-acre North Dakota base, for instance, is ideal for unmanned aerial vehicle training flights because of a lack of competing commercial traffic. It also will host

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

large-scale training exercises, officials said. Hangars at these installations can accommodate guest squadrons, providing the service with a more robust exercise capability, said Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper. Air Force officials assured commissioners that in many cases where a base is not technically closed, the service will turn over land -- including some airfields -- to surrounding communities. "We are bringing back the fence line to be able to cede real property," said acting Air Force Secretary Michael Dominguez. In addition to serving as training sites, the bases provide the Air Force with a "hedging strategy" if personnel or force structure change dramatically, Dominguez said.

Today's BRAC hearing focused on Air Force facilities, and members analyzed Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's list of basing recommendations released Friday, which includes 10 Air Force bases slated for closure and another 62 targeted for realignment. With personnel and equipment moving from one base to another, the list affects 115 of the 154 Air Force installations. If the recommendations are implemented, the Air Force expects to save more than \$1 billion in personnel and infrastructure through 2011, and another \$1.2 billion each year after that.

The commission has less than four months to evaluate the secretary's recommendations and submit its list to the White House by Sept. 3. Commissioners still are waiting for the Pentagon to send thousands of pages of documents detailing the decisions and the reasoning behind them. The commission expected to see the documents Friday, though the Pentagon held them back because of concerns about classified information. Commissioners grilled Rumsfeld and other Pentagon leaders on the lack of information Monday and brought the matter up again at today's hearing. The commission will have the information by the end of the week, Pentagon officials said.

Missouri lawmakers make case to keep military bases open

Associated Press

July 21, 2005

Political leaders from seven Midwestern states cited security concerns in making their pitch to keep open military bases and units on the Pentagon's closure list.

Three members of the federal base closing and realignment commission met Monday with leaders from Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan at Saint Louis University. The hearing was one of 16 around the country through early next month.

The commission will make recommendations to President Bush by September. Chairman Harold Gehman Jr., a retired Navy admiral and former NATO supreme allied commander, called the process a "reality check ... devoid of politics."

Officials from Missouri, perhaps the hardest hit of the seven states, told the commission that homeland and economic security would be threatened if the 131st Fighter Wing at Lambert Airport is removed. Without the 131st, the state and region would be more vulnerable to attack on bridges, locks and dams, nuclear power plants, monuments, weapons facilities and other possible terrorist targets, officials said.

Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., noted that even Gov. Matt Blunt wasn't told of the Pentagon's decision to eliminate the 131st, a deal that "shows the Pentagon's bias against the National Guard." Bond

**Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2015**

said.

Blunt added: "As governor of the state, I need to know who will meet the needs of all these fighters are gone."

Illinois could lose 1,263 jobs moved from the Rock Island Arsenal - 163 from Springfield's Air National Guard base and 2,022 from the Central Postal Directory Recruit Training Center and in North Chicago. Gov. Rod Blagojevich also cited security concerns.

Blagojevich told the panel he worried that the changes would make less safe the state's 11 nuclear power plants, the 28 locks and dams on various rivers, and several large Midwest port cities, including Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and Des Moines.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, defended the Rock Island base for what he called its impenetrable security.

"It's on an island. You can't get more secure than that," he told reporters.

Consolidation of the Army's Human Resources Command drew criticism from the state's contingent, but support from Kentucky's. That's not surprising - the plan calls for moving 2,000 jobs from Overland in St. Louis County and moving them to Fort Knox, Ky. Facilities in Alexandria, Va., and Indianapolis would also move to Fort Knox.

U.S. Rep. William "Lacy" Clay, a Democrat from St. Louis, urged the BRAC Commission to consolidate the function in Overland instead. He cited the experienced workforce and a secure building that is less than 15 years old.

Sen. Jim Talent, R-Mo., noted the move to Fort Knox would cost at least \$150 million in extra expenses, including money for housing. "Where are they going to put temporary tents?" Talent asked.

But retired Brig. Gen. James Shane, representing Kentucky, lauded the consolidation at Fort Knox, saying there would be an immediate payoff to the \$150 million expense.

Kentucky would lose its Fort Knox Armor School but gain an Infantry Brigade Combat Team under the proposal. The shift away from armor would mean a loss of more than 2,000 military and civilian jobs at the base.

Kentucky representatives asked the commission to reconsider the downgrade of the Fort Knox Ireland Army Hospital. They also objected to moving part of Louis's Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center to New Jersey.

All told, Missouri stands to lose 3,579 jobs. Kentucky could lose 3,653, and Illinois could lose 2,698 in the cuts announced in May.

Indiana, by contrast, would gain nearly 2,200 mostly civilian jobs. A delegate from Indiana argued for retention of nearly 700 jobs at the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center in southern Indiana.

**Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005**

Crane, about 30 miles southwest of Bloomington, does electronic warfare and command designs and surfaces naval fleets. The Pentagon proposal would move three of Crane's functions to other states.

The Michigan delegation led by Democratic Sen. Carl Levin supports Pentagon plans to expand the Detroit Arsenal in Warren by 650 jobs and make it a pre-eminent center for automotive and ground vehicle research and development.

But the group strenuously objected to closing the W.K. Kellogg Airport Air Guard Station in Battle Creek and the U.S. Army Garrison at Selfridge Air National Guard Base outside Detroit.

Wisconsin, too, challenged the Pentagon's plan to shutter the 440th Airmail Wing at Milwaukee's airport. Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle said closing the 440th would be a mistake.

Besides **Gehman**, commissioners at the St. Louis hearing were James Hansen, a navy veteran and former Republican congressman from Utah; and Jane Ellen Turner, a retired Air Force brigadier general.

The next regional hearing is Tuesday in Rapid City, S.D., and concerns plans for South Dakota and Wyoming. Hearings are also scheduled this week for Thursday in Grand Forks, N.D. (North Dakota and Minnesota) and Friday in Clovis, N.M. (New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada).

BRAC commissioners appear impressed by Battle Creek arguments

Gannett News Service
June 21, 2005

ST. LOUIS -- A panel of independent experts appeared impressed Tuesday by unbridled criticism presented by Battle Creek representatives of a Pentagon recommendation to close the city's W.K. Kellogg Airport Air Guard Station.

Under the Pentagon plan, the 110th Fighter Wing's 15 A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft -- and the men and women who fly and maintain them -- would leave Battle Creek and move across the state to become part of the 127th Wing at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Hamilton Township.

"The Michigan delegation had good facts and were challenging the specifics of the military value equation," said Harold **Gehman**, a member of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission that is reviewing the Pentagon's recommended military base closures. It will come up with a final list by Sept. 5.

"They gave us homework to do," **Gehman** said in reference to the Michigan delegation. He spoke to reporters at the end of a daylong hearing held by three of the nine BRAC commissioners on proposed closures and restructurings in seven Midwestern states.

Gehman specifically noted he was struck by testimony by retired Maj. Gen. William Stump that the Air Force's recommended charges appeared to be an effort to pay for their future force by taking money away from their guard and reserve operations. Stump served as Michigan's adjutant general, overseeing the state's Army and Air National Guard units, from 1971 until 2003.

Other arguments made by the four Battle Creek representatives testifying included a detailed

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

critique presented by George Erickcek of the Uplift Institute, a Kalamazoo theater group. Erickcek argued:

-- The Pentagon didn't gather the correct information to analyze the military value of the Kellogg Air Guard Station. For example, it asked about the base's weather conditions at 2,000 feet, but A-10s operate at 500 feet or lower.

-- The Pentagon overstated the cost savings of closing the Kellogg Air Guard Station, which it estimated at \$167 million over 20 years. The Pentagon used an inflated annual cost of operating the Kellogg base, ignored the cost of improving Selfridge to house the A-10s and didn't fully account for the cost of retraining Selfridge pilots to fly A-10s.

Battle Creek's presentation was bolstered by the presence of about 30 residents who drove and bused down to attend the hearing, in an effort organized by the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce. All the supporters wore blue t-shirts with a photo of A-10s.

"We wanted to show our group solidarity," said Kathleen Mechem, the chamber's president and CEO, as she displayed her shirt during the hearing.

Gehman also said he would relay to BRAC commission Chairman Anthony Principi the Michigan representatives' request that commission members visit the Battle Creek base. But **Gehman** also noted that the commission has little time to do its work.

The commission's task began May 13 when the Pentagon recommended closing 10 major U.S. bases -- including the Kellogg Air Guard Station -- and restructuring 29 others as part of a modernization plan.

Rep. Joe Schwarz, one of the Battle Creek representatives testifying, said he is confident that the BRAC commissioners would visit Battle Creek. The Kellogg Air Guard Station was the only proposed major closure that commissioners hadn't yet promised to visit, said Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Also representing Michigan during the 30-minute presentation was Sen. Carl Levin, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, who spoke in favor of a Pentagon proposal to move various operations to the Detroit Arsenal from Illinois, Alabama and Georgia for a gain of 647 jobs.

Levin also addressed a recommendation to close the Army garrison at Selfridge, which provides housing and other support services to military personnel at the base. Levin said some members of the local community disagree on whether to shut down the garrison but agreed that if it closed, its land and support functions should be transferred to the Air Force.

Noticeably absent from the hearing was Rep. Candice Miller, R-Harrison Township, whose district includes Selfridge. She has said she is satisfied with the Pentagon's recommendations and that without Battle Creek's A-10s, Selfridge's future would be uncertain.

The Pentagon's proposed changes would send Selfridge's 927th Air Refueling Wing to MacDill Air Force Base in Florida but increase the fleet of Selfridge's 127th Wing, in part by sending over

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

Battle Creek's A-10 aircraft. The result would be a loss of 216 full-time jobs for the base and a loss of 274 full-time jobs for Battle Creek.

Levin said that keeping Kellogg Air Guard Station open wouldn't doom Selfridge because the BRAC commission could send aircraft from elsewhere in the country to Selfridge.

"You have to look at the whole chessboard," Levin said.

BRAC member says DOD needs to give specifics on recommendations

Associated Press

May 26, 2006

A member of a military base closing review panel said Thursday the Department of Defense needs to explain how money is to be saved under its proposal to move computer systems management from Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base to a Massachusetts base.

Retired Admiral Harold **Gehman** said the Pentagon believes shifting the Maxwell program and others to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts will provide "a better program."

"Now they have to demonstrate that it's because the cost of doing it is really high," he said.

Gehman spoke to reporters after touring the Maxwell-Gunter operation and then meeting with Gov. Bob Riley, U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions and Montgomery Mayor Bobbi Berg.

Riley characterized the meeting with **Gehman** "as a very frank and open discussion," said Jeff Emerson, the governor's communications director.

"Gov. Riley and other Alabama officials want to make sure the information coming by the Pentagon in making this recommendation is accurate," Emerson said in a statement. "If the information is not accurate, it puts us in a stronger position to challenge the recommendation."

Sessions said they discussed some of the issues that would have to be addressed before the commission could overturn the DOD's recommendation, though he would not elaborate. He said the military significance of each base would be the biggest factor for the commission.

"It's not going to be a political decision. The commission is going to be like Admiral **Gehman** - they're going to be focused on doing the right thing," Sessions said.

Gehman is one of nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure commission who are visiting each of the 33 major bases slated for closing and scores of smaller bases to be downsized. In September, the panel will accept or modify the base-closing plan.

Gehman said the commission is investigating the cost-savings rationale reported in the Pentagon's review and is in the process of receiving specific numbers that support the recommendations.

"The little bity numbers buried in the report that usually (the recommendations) just come out," he said. "For example, this reassignment costs \$65 million - but where did that number come from?"

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

Under the recommendations, Maxwell would lose overall 1,251 jobs - 740 military and 511 civilian. Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base has about 21,000 service personnel and civilians, meaning it would retain about 95 percent of its workforce - but losing 1,251 highly skilled posts would be significant.

The job losses at Maxwell-Gunter in Montgomery would be caused by moving the Operations Systems and Sustainment Group, known as OSGS, to Hanscom - where federal, state, Congress and state and local officials had been lobbying hard to keep the group in town.

They proposed a \$410 million expansion of the Massachusetts base in a bid to make it more indispensable to the military.

Gehman said the computer systems management done at Maxwell-Gunter is "critical to the national security of the country."

He said there is a set of eight criteria the commission uses to make its recommendations - the first four entail military significance. Economic impact to base communities, while important, is the last issue considered.

"Yes we will consider the economics of the situation, but it's pretty far down the list," he said.

He said the visits are not for fact-finding, but used to supplement the data submitted by the DOD. The commission members' observations on Maxwell-Gunter will be discussed publicly at a BRAC regional hearing June 30 in Atlanta.

BRAC commissioner praise selection process; set to go on the road

Copley News Service

May 19, 2005

After four days of hearing from the Panagono Yards who created the recommendations for base reductions, members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission praised that selection process Thursday, but said they were looking forward to hearing from the affected communities.

"I think they've done a pretty good job," said retired Navy Adm. Harold **Johnson**, who filled in for chairman Anthony Principi at the final Washington hearing.

Two commissioners added after the hearing that they still have not seen many thick volumes of data supporting the sweeping list of 37 closures or realignments.

"We're still waiting for a lot of the information, so there are gaps," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Turner.

And they said they were looking forward to hearing the other side, from the representatives of the facilities slated for closure or reductions and the communities that would be impacted.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

"We want to hear from the people in the communities. We need to hear from them," said Phillip Coyle, the former director of operational testing and evaluation who now lives in Los Angeles.

Asked if the commission might add any bases to the Pentagon's list for possible closure, **Gehman** said, "I think that would be an outcome of the public hearings with the communities." If a community representative "brings up a legitimate issue," and challenges the Defense Department numbers on military value, "we would have to go back and compare the numbers."

"As far as I know functionally, that is the only way a base facility that is on the list could rise up," he said.

Under the law creating this commission, it would take votes from seven of the nine commissioners to add a base to the possible closure list. It takes only five votes to remove a facility.

As the panel prepared to start hearing the appeals of the impacted base and communities, four commissioners announced they would exempt themselves from considering installations in states with which they are associated.

Gehman said he would recuse himself from decisions involving any Virginia base gaining or losing in the process because he had served briefly as an unpaid adviser on BRAC to Virginia Gov. Mark Warner.

Similarly, Coyle said he would not participate in substantial decisions involving California bases because he had played a similar unpaid advisory role to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

And former congressmen James Bliley, D-Nev., and James Hansen, R-Iowa, recused themselves from deliberations involving the states they had represented.

All four said they probably were not required to stand aside on the disposition of those bases but wanted to remove any indication of conflict of interest.

Gehman said commission members would hold 13 day-long regional hearings and at least two commissioners would visit 65 of the larger affected bases. Other commission staff members would visit the smaller facilities on the list, he said.

The hearings will start with June 7 sessions in Salt Lake City and in the fields and conclude with a July 14 hearing in Los Angeles.

The commissioners and their aides also will be reviewing the Pentagon data on which the recommendations were based and might hold additional hearings if they are required to make their report to President Bush on Sept. 8.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

Even as the commission moved ahead on implementing the base closure recommendations, affected members of Congress still were trying to derail the process. The House Armed Services Committee rejected a proposed amendment to the defense authorization bill that would have stopped the process and 10 senators have introduced similar legislation.

Local News Articles

Officials See Hope In BRAC Criticisms

Scripps News Service

July 18, 2005

State officials have been encouraged this week at the open resistance by members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission toward the recommended closures of Air National Guard facilities, including a plan to shift the A-10 jets of the 103rd Fighter Wing from Connecticut to Massachusetts.

Also Wednesday, both of Connecticut's senators, Christopher J. Dodd and Joseph Lieberman, and U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, met with BRAC members James Dunbar and James Hill to plead the Groton submarine base's case. And Gov. M. Jodi Rell is finding a PAC-fighting colleague from a strange source -- U.S. Sen. John Warner, a Republican from Virginia, the state that hopes to receive two of Groton's submarine squadrons.

As the commission's nationwide base-closing process speeds toward its September conclusion, the nine-member panel has begun to actively rework the list of recommendations made by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal has begun to question what the BRAC members said to Pentagon officials Monday. Several commissioners said the Pentagon had taken a number of missteps -- undermining recruiting and homeland security missions in the affected states, failing to get input from Air National Guard officials and failing to get governors' consent, which may be legally required for manipulating these state-assigned units.

Anthony Principi, BRAC chairman, is quoted in a transcript as telling Pentagon officials, "the commission believes a solution is needed."

Another commissioner, retired Adm. Harold Gehman, said, "It appears that you have inconsistently applied military value to your decisions. It appears to violate several standing regulations and laws. And it appears to have several hidden policy issues embedded in it."

"It would be easy for us to just throw the whole thing back to the Department of Defense for those reasons," Gehman said, but that would be "irresponsible." "Therefore, we need some help on how to proceed from here."

Blumenthal said in a Wednesday statement on the shift of Connecticut's 103rd Fighter Wing: "There can be no move without our governor's explicit, direct consent." Governor Rell has objected forcefully and appropriately. We are ready to take legal action against the federal government if it

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

disregards our state's objection, as well as the law."

Rich Harris, spokesman for the governor, said, "There are several plans of attack that the governor is pursuing to keep the A-10s in Connecticut. There's a lot going on in terms of different places."

But what was commanding his office's attention Wednesday was Warner's criticism of the Pentagon's estimates for environmental cleanup. Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, took issue with cleanup estimates for Fort Monroe in his state.

Warner's opinion mirrors what Rell's BRAC "strike force" came up with in February, trying to demonstrate the Pentagon was way off when it guessed how much the clean-up of the 99-year-old submarine base might run. The estimates for saving, from closing, that exceeded what Rell has argued.

BRAC: Safe at home base; Commission vote keeps Grand Forks Air Force Base off Pentagon closure list
Grand Forks Herald
July 20, 2005

The federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted Tuesday in Washington to keep Grand Forks Air Force Base off its closure list.

By a 6-3 vote, the nine-member panel effectively ended any practical possibility of the base being closed in the foreseeable future.

"It's a great day," said Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D. "It's over, it shows, but it was a hard and the facts were on the side of Grand Forks."

His colleague, Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., was one of several North Dakota base supporters in the BRAC meeting in the Dirksen building on Capitol Hill.

"This was the big hurdle," Dorgan said. "The Grand Forks base now can't be put on the closure list. The sign outside the hangar will say 'Welcome' rather than 'Good-bye.'"

The BRAC panel now cannot add Grand Forks to the closure list as the commission completes its work by late August.

But other bases were added to the list for parts of a round of "expanded realignment" today: the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine; the Navy's Broadway Complex in San Diego; the Navy's Master Jet Base in Oceana, Va.; Pope Air Force Base, N.C.; and Galena Alotau Forward Operating Location in Alaska.

Kept off the list with Grand Forks were Moody Air Force Base, near Valdosta, Ga.; the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego; and the Navy's repair shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

"This commission knows what it is talking about and is not a rubber stamp. We are an independent check on the power of the (defense) secretary to close and realign military bases," BRAC commission Chairman Anthony Principi said after the vote.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

Adding a base to the list does not mean it will be closed. Principle emphasis of BRAC does allow the commission more flexibility and further analysis and study in arriving at its final recommendations for streamlining the military, due by late August.

Future force

This week, the BRAC panel was charged with considering the addition of eleven to military bases to the list of 33 proposed for closing that the Pentagon released May 13. The Grand Forks base was - and now remains - one of 23 bases

slated for realignment on the May 13 list.

The Pentagon's aim is to save \$49 billion over 20 years while refocusing the U.S. military for a new way of making war in the 21st century, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has said.

President Bush could send the commission's recommendations, which are due on his desk Sept. 8, back for revisions - which is considered unlikely - and then must approve them, fill a hole and send them to Congress, which will have 45 days to act on them.

After nearly 15 years of five base closing rounds, there are no future BRAC rounds contemplated.

Citing the testimony Monday before the BRAC Commission of Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Michael Moseley, BRAC panel members Tuesday said it was clear the military wanted the base for its strategic location, the proximity of an Air Guard unit nearby in Fargo and the potential for adding the "emerging" mission of unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs.

"It seems to me there's a good argument not to close it," said commissioner Samuel Skinner, former Transportation Secretary.

Happy day

That was music to the ears of North Dakota's sole member in the House, Rep. Paul Pomeroy, D-N.D., who, with Gov. John Hoeven, a Republican, also attended Tuesday's commission hearing, too.

"We worked very hard to get the story out on Grand Forks Air Force base," Pomeroy said. Before Tuesday's meeting, Pomeroy, Dorgan and Conrad said BRAC commissioners assured them the base was safe.

The motion to add Grand Forks to the closure list failed after receiving only 100 votes; it would have taken seven to add the base to the list.

While the vote was strong, the months leading up to it were intense, and it was a close call this spring, said Pomeroy and others.

Until May 4, nine days before releasing its closure list, the Pentagon planned to recommend closing the Grand Forks base.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

But Conrad said that intensive lobbying done by the congressional delegation such as Hoeven and base retention leader John Marshall and others had no impact.

Conrad cited two key points that swayed Pentagon and BRAC officials: the fact that the Grand Forks base is the only major Air Force base between Minot and the Atlantic Ocean and the stark emptiness of North Dakota's skies and land for use by the Air Force.

The lack of space and sky hurt other bases.

Commissioner James Hill, a retired Army general, noted that the Navy has been able to close Oceana base because of encroaching development from surrounding Virginia Beach, Va., but doesn't have any feasible alternative.

Closing the Grand Forks base would have saved \$674 million over about 15 years, but would have meant losing more than 6,600 military and civilian positions - more than 90 percent of jobs in the Grand Forks area, according to an Air Force analysis. Those figures are higher than previously released by the Pentagon.

However, one commission member, Admiral Harold Gehman, questioned the accounting of cost savings and said that with all factors considered, it appeared to save "zero."

GF case

Whatever the impact on the Pentagon's budget, the fact that the Grand Forks base will remain open is good news, fiscally speaking, for the entire region, Hoeven said.

The base's location on the Northern border makes it strategic for getting to the other side of the world fast, Hoeven said. Plus, it ranks high as a site for the new UAVs with lots of room and the nearby support of the Air Guard unit in Fargo, he said.

BRAC commissioners were impressed with the fact that the base is in Central ND. "Well" more than \$300 million has been spent in recent years adding new housing and repairing and expanding the runway at the base.

The June visit from three BRAC commissioners - Philip Coyle, Skinner and William Bilbray - was successful, Conrad said.

"The three commissioners who came to Grand Forks were strong advocates for the base," Conrad said.

However, questions were raised today by one BRAC commissioner about whether Grand Forks should be put on the closure list.

After a BRAC staff member outlined comparisons of Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, S.D., with Grand Forks, Commissioner Gehman argued Grand Forks should be added to the closure list to give the commission a better chance to compare it "apples to apples" with Ellsworth.

"It seems to me the only way we can compare is by creating both bases the same," he said. "Close

**Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005**

them both and sort this out."

In the end, only **Gehman**, Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, a retired Air Force officer and former Republican Rep. James Hansen of Utah voted to put Grand Forks on the closure list.

Today's vote means the Pentagon's proposal to realign the base, moving its current unit of 44 KC-135 air refueling tankers, cutting 2,300 of its 2,900 military personnel and adding an unspecified new UAV mission remains operative.

The congressional delegation and Hoeven hold out hope that the base will remain a tanker mission, especially once the Air Force is able to buy a new model of tanker to replace the aging KC-135 fleet.

In either case, the current contingent of tankers will not be transferred out until 2009 under the Pentagon's plan.

Well spent

Mayor Michael Brown said Tuesday's decision shows that the \$750,000 in city sales tax revenues allocated to be spent since 2003 on the city's base retention effort was a good investment.

"That was money well spent," Brown said. "It will bring back dividends in the future. And we expect the mission (at the base) to expand."

More than \$600,000 of the money has been spent, the largest amount on lobbyists, consultants and expenses and a retainer for Marshall, the Grand Forks businessman who headed the base retention effort for years.

East Grand Forks Mayor Lynn Stauss said he was "very elated" about the BRAC vote. "This is great news for the whole region," he said. About 15 businesses with an active division of Air Force member live in East Grand Forks, and many of them have children in the city's schools, he said.

Stauss testified at the BRAC hearing last month in Grand Forks, as did Minnesota's Sens. Norm Coleman and Mark Dayton, joining the advocates from North Dakota. The next thing is to get the BRAC commission to remove the wording in the Pentagon plans that directs the existing mission to the "Happy Hooligans," the 119th fighter wing 7th Guard unit in Fargo, Dorgan said.

Meanwhile, Air Force officials told him Monday that they have put the UAV procurement process on a faster track, Dorgan said, which should mean the big planes will be landing at the Grand Forks base sooner than later.

Because Congress has been reluctant to allow the Air Force to retire any of the KC-135 fleet, once a new model tanker is chosen and begins to be manufactured and distributed, it's likely the Grand Forks base will be needed as a site for the larger tanker fleet, Dorgan said.

Hoeven agreed.

"I think the Air Force is going to need Grand Forks for the management of the tanker fleet," said Hoeven. "I think we have a good chance of continuing with tankers at Grand Forks and for an

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

opportunity to get the new tankers."

He met in Des Moines, Iowa, on Monday with Michael Chertoff, head of Dept. of Security.

"We talked about the need for an integrated system on the border that involves all those things, including UAVs, sensors, the law enforcement end, the Border Patrol, the private system and the private sector," Hoeven said. "He made the point that we can't just do it with just added manpower but that we really need to develop systems of technology."

Supporters of the Grand Forks base in Washington were in a celebratory mood. Conrad said he had a North-Dakota-shaped cake on his desk Tuesday, waiting to be cut as Hoeven and Pomeroy joined him.

Language institute a long shot for Utah; BRAC: The commission voted Tuesday to take a new look at new homes for 3 graduate schools run by Pentagon

Salt Lake Tribune

July 20, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted Tuesday to take another look at the future of the Defense Language Institute in California, but military advocates say bringing the coveted school to the state may be a long shot.

The commission voted 8-0 to take a broad look at identifying the best situation for three Pentagon-run graduate schools -- the language institute and Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., and the Air Force Institute of Technology in Ohio.

Vicki McCall, president of the Utah Defense Alliance, said "there was so much ambiguity" in the commission's discussion, that it is hard to tell what they will consider. "Even the commissioners are not really sure what this means right now," she said.

But she said her impression from talks with commissioners, including former Utah Rep. Jim Hansen, is that they are looking at leaving them unchanged or combining them at one location, which probably would rule out Utah.

"It's a stretch to think we're going to get it, but I would not deny there's an opportunity, because now it's being discussed for closure," McCall said, but her sense is the commission is not looking to relocate the language institute.

The state has long had its eye on the school, located on the California coast south of San Francisco, and there has been discussion of moving the facility since 1991, but only because of the expense in keeping it where it is.

In 1994, the state submitted a proposal to the Army to move the language school to Hill Air Force Base and partner it with Brigham Young University's nationally renowned language program.

Utah's bid was taken seriously at the time, but any plans to relocate the language institute were scuttled through a combination of some financial incentives offered by the city of Monterey, and opposition from President Clinton's chief of staff Leon Panetta, who had reassigned Monterey in Congress.

**Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005**

The Defense Language Institute employs about 1,300 civilian workers, including 400 faculty. It offers courses in about 25 different languages to 3,000 students annually from each branch of the service.

Utah officials continue to believe the state would be a good fit for the school because of the language programs at the state's universities and the large number of returning US missionaries who are bilingual.

In this round, the Pentagon did not recommend any changes to the three graduate schools in its closure and realignment list released in May, but the commission reviewed the proposal for changes by including it on its list.

Retired Gen. Lloyd Newton expressed reservations that the commission was not to look at moving all three facilities to Monterey, "taking it to a high-cost area."

"I don't have a problem in engaging in a process of deciding whether we should combine these functions. I do have a problem in that, seemingly, we have already decided where these functions should go," he said. "Instead of studying this to see if it should go to Monterey, you should be studying this to see where is the best place for it to go."

That sentiment was supported by other commission and the staff. "You're trying to preclude any options here. We want to look at the best option," said retired Admiral Harold Gehman, Jr.

The commission will hear from the communities that could be affected by changes to the schools and will vote Aug. 22 on any final action. It would take votes from seven of the nine commissioners to close or realign any of the facilities.

Panel told jet tanker proposal ignores law

Birmingham News

July 1, 2005

ATLANTA - Alabama's top-ranking National Guard officer told federal officials Thursday that the Department of Defense didn't follow the law when it recommended moving 400 US jet tankers from Birmingham to other Guard bases.

"We believe DoD substantially deviated from the Defense Closure and Realignment Act of 1990," Maj. Gen. Mark Bowen told three members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

"It is clear that DoD ignored and failed to consider military value, which was contrary to the law," said Bowen, Alabama's adjutant general.

Bowen joined Gov. Bob Riley, Sens. Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, and others who came here to try to sway three of the nine BRAC Commission members appointed by President Bush.

Commission members are holding 16 regional meetings across the country in preparation to a Defense Department reorganization plan announced May 13. If approved, it would close more than 30 major military bases and save an estimated \$39 billion over 20 years.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

The commission can rewrite the Pentagon plan and must file its revised budget and realignment plan to Bush by Sept. 8. Any commission plan accepted by Bush would become law by year's end unless Congress passed a joint resolution to reject it.

In past BRAC reviews, commissions have accepted about 85 percent of the Pentagon's recommendations.

Commissioners Samuel Skinner, James Bilbray and Harold **Gehman** heard from Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee officials. Alabama has had about an hour to make its case.

Riley noted that Alabama overall would do well under the Defense Department plan, gaining 2,664 military and civilian jobs.

He drew laughs in a crowded conference room when he urged commissioners to keep changes that would add jobs at the Anniston Army Depot, Redstone Arsenal near Huntsville and Fort Rucker near Emersville. "DoD has made several sound and responsible recommendations," Riley said. "Don't change them."

But he and others asked commissioners to make five changes to the plan, including Bowen's request that they junk the idea of moving all KC-10 tankers from Birmingham.

Bowen pointed to a Defense Department study that ranked the military value of the 117th Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham ahead of six Guard tanker wings nationwide that would remain, including units in Bangor, Maine, and Knoxville, which would get some of the 117th's aircraft.

"Commissioners, the recommendation to realign the Air National Guard tankers fleet will degrade operational readiness and makes no sense," Bowen said. "The DoD substitution is unrelated from the military value criteria specified in the law."

He noted that the 12,000-foot runway under construction at Birmingham International Airport will let jet tankers carry much more fuel and travel much farther than making it fly from Knoxville's 9,000-foot runway.

Gehman, a retired admiral, said later that the Alabama delegation's claim that the secretary of defense didn't follow the law caught his attention.

"I wouldn't comment on how that deliberation is going to turn out in the end," Gehman said. "But when a delegation makes that allegation, they're going

right to the jugular."

Birmingham will lose 183 fulltime and 326 regular Guard positions if the 117th Air Refueling Wing's aircraft go to other bases, Bowen said.

Other changes

Riley, Shelby, Sessions, local officials and U.S. Reps. Spencer Bachus, R-Vanderbilt Hills; Bud Cramer, D-Huntsville; Terry Everett, R-Knoxville; and Mike Rogers, R-Zenobia, have spoken or written comments also urged commissioners to:

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BIAA 2005

--> **Reject** the Pentagon's recommendation to move from Maxwell Air Force Base near Montgomery the Operations and Sustainment Systems Group, which provides technical support for computers and other information technology used throughout the Air Force.

The move would take 1,250 military and civilian jobs from Maxwell. The group would move to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts, where the Defense Department wants to create a high-tech research, development, testing and evaluation center.

--> **Add** to the plan a recommendation to move the Navy's helicopter pilot training from near Pensacola to Fort Rucker, where Air Force and Army helicopter pilots already train.

Charles Nailen Jr., chairman of Friends of Fort Rucker, estimated the consolidation could save more than \$100 million a year. Skinner said the commission couldn't consider recommending that change without

hard, certifiable numbers. Nailen said he would get them.

--> **Move** the aviation portion of the Army's Command and Control Electronic Command to Redstone Arsenal, instead of moving all of the command from New Jersey to Maryland.

--> **Let** commanders of depots such as the Ammunition Army Depot keep control over procuring parts and supplies instead of giving oversight to the Defense Logistics Agency.

Skinner, former chief of staff to President George H.W. Bush, said Alabama officials "did an excellent job of preparing."

"The presentation was excellent. Obviously, we'll have to look at it," he said. "A lot of these presentations are very, very good. This was right in the top."

Officials hope new data can save 183rd
The State Journal-Register
June 26, 2005

Most military installations saved from the Pentagon's ax in the last round of base closings in 1995 had one of two attributes: The Defense Department either had overestimated the savings to be realized by closing a base or had underestimated a base's military value.

In the last three rounds of base closings in 1991, 1993 and 1995, the commission approved 83 percent, 84 percent and 84 percent, respectively, of the closings recommended by the Pentagon.

In 1995, the Pentagon recommended 140 base closures or realignments, but a commission removed 23 of those bases from the list (counting four facilities the Pentagon voluntarily removed from the list for various reasons).

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2045

"Typically, it's been the case that data comes to light that was not used in the Pentagon's decision," said Paul Taibl, policy director for the non-partisan Business Executives for National Security in Washington, D.C., about why commissioners strike bases from the list. "It's pretty hard to come up with new details, new data."

State and local officials arguing for the 183rd have said the Pentagon's proposal to transfer the 183rd's planes to Fort Wayne International Airport Air Guard Station would actually cost the Pentagon money.

Springfield claims the Pentagon fudged the small savings it would realize by combining the costs and savings of transferring the 183rd's planes along with the realignment of the Hulman Air Guard station in Terre Haute, Ind., to Fort Wayne.

The Pentagon said the realignments will save \$2 million annually starting in 13 years. But to implement the changes, the Pentagon will have to spend \$13.5 million.

"There is no payback - ever - associated with realigning the fighter planes out of Springfield," a written summary of Springfield's arguments against the realignment said. "Without grouping Terre Haute and Fort Wayne into the Capital Airport realignment, there would be no savings at all, and the Air Force would have no justification in its recommendation."

During this year's BRAC process, it has not been unusual for the Air Force to combine cost savings from recommendations involving multiple bases to come up with a total cost savings figure as it did with the Springfield, Fort Wayne and Hulman bases. The Pentagon did this with at least 14 of its Air Force recommendations.

State and local officials have argued that Springfield has been listed by the Pentagon as ranking higher in military value than Fort Wayne and has a similar, if not better, recruiting record. The commissioners have asked for detailed data on the recruiting record of the 183rd, which the city said it will provide.

In the 19 bases saved by the commission in 2005, not once did commissioners cite community support or economic impact as the primary reason for saving the base.

In four cases, the commission said that the Pentagon had made faulty judgments on an installation's military value. In nine cases, the commission found a problem in the Pentagon's computations of cost savings. In eight of those nine, commissioners also felt that military value was underestimated as well.

In six cases, the commission said the Pentagon improperly assessed the bases' ability to receive new missions from the shuttered bases. This was because the commission decided to close the two bases set to receive missions from the six bases the Pentagon wanted to shutter.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

"The best testimony includes analytical data." 2005 commissioner James Hansen, a former Utah congressman, told reporters in St. Louis last week. "You don't expect everyone to get emotional, to talk about how terrible it is. But the fact of the matter is the military has had an awful long time to work on this."

Most of the states and cities testifying at the commission's hearing on the many alleged problems with the Pentagon's methodology, whether it related to military expense or the estimated cost savings.

"I was pleasantly surprised with the ability of communities to give data on how the BRAC process did them wrong," said commissioner Joe Ellenberger, a retired Air Force general. "That gives us something to work with."

But whether the commissioners buy the case of Springfield - or any other city - will hinge on analysis that must be done by the commission's staff over the next several months.

"Anybody who's brought a challenge, we will advocate what's right and what's wrong," said commissioner Harold Gehman, a retired admiral. "Our staff will do a detailed analysis."

Hansen added that even in cases where a community does present detailed data, "we haven't had the other folks (from the Pentagon) on the stand. Usually they have a pretty good answer" as to why they made a certain recommendation.

Mayor Tim Davlin said he will travel to Washington at least once to monitor the BRAC process is completed to present additional data to the commissioners.

Commissioners will take a vote on each one of the Pentagon's recommendations at a public hearing. It takes five votes on the nine-member commission to remove a base from the list.

Commissioners have until Sept. 8 to review the Pentagon's suggested changes and render a final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 21 to accept or reject it. Congress then has 45 days to accept or reject the final report.

Different this year as compared to 1995 is the relatively large number of Air National Guard bases slated for closure or realignment by the Pentagon. In 1995, four Air Guard stations were recommended for closure. In 2005, 13 Air National Guard bases with aircraft are set to be realigned or shuttered.

The 1995 commission saved three of them: the Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport Air Guard Station in Ohio, the Moffett Federal Airfield Air Guard Station in California, the North Highlands Air Guard Station in California, while the other, West Air Guard Station in New York, was closed. The Springfield, Ohio, base is recommended for realignment this year.

Press Comments
Commissioner Gehman
BRAC 2005

In the case of the Springfield, Ohio, base, the Pentagon overestimated the savings in closing the base. The other two Air Guard bases were struck from the list because the commission decided to close two larger Air Force bases to which the Air Guard installations were set to be transferred.

The three commissioners who were at a hearing Monday in St. Louis may hope to hold a hearing on whether the Pentagon's methodology for determining military value was biased against smaller bases and units, such as the 183rd. Gehman said they have heard frequent complaints that Air Guard units were not consulted during the process.

Opinions/ Editorials

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

National News Articles

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report

July 20, 2005

"I'm not convinced that Portsmouth should be closed, either," said commission member and retired Army Gen. James Hill. He is retiring next spring after 31 years of service.

Officials call on Pentagon to close more bases

Scripps News Service

July 18, 2005

Retired Gen. James Hill, a commission member, warned that the military should not be forced to close a facility that it might someday have to use.

"When we close these bases, we're not getting them back," Hill said.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention In Guard, Reserves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

Commission chairman Anthony Principi expressed similar concerns about all of the commission's proposed closures. Retired Army Gen. James Hill called it a "monumental step forward."

Air Force Might Keep Bases Open After Personnel Moves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

Former Army Gen. James Hill likewise noted that it might be "better for these communities to close so [they] can begin to rebuild, make something out of it."

BRAC Gets Started With Intelligence Briefing On Threats

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 4, 2005

The nation's response to global threats "affects the U.S. military in dramatic ways and affects the work of this commission," said retired Army Gen. James Hill, a BRAC commissioner. In particular, he said, the military might need to change the way it trains troops, increasing police and security forces.

Local News Articles

Navy's Oceana Might Not Be Spared After A-1: Virginia Base Now On Closure List;

Officials Vow Effort to Keep It Open

Richmond Times-Dispatch

July 20, 2005

One of the panel members who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. James Hill, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, "but we can do that."

BASE CLOSURES; Holy City to give panel a hand; BRAC offers Charleston team job after impressive presentation to save Navy facilities

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

The State (South Carolina)
July 10, 2005

*One of the panel members who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. **James Hill**, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, "but we can do that."*

Thousands rally around Naval Station Ingleside Crowd, concert display support for targeted base

Corpus Christi Caller-Times
July 8, 2005

***Hill**, one of nine Base Realignment and Closure commissioners who will review the Defense Department's recommendation to close Naval Station Ingleside and move jobs from Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, said he was "touched by the overwhelming of support."*

"We understand that this is about more than military value," he said. "This is about jobs and lives, your jobs and your lives. We're sensitive to that."

Military-base supporters, lawmakers attend hearing in Charlotte, N.C.

The Charlotte Observer
June 29, 2005

*BRAC Commissioner **James Hill**, a retired general, conceded that economics always lurk in the background.*

*"We understand this is a whole lot more than dollar figures, planes or bases," **Hill** said to reporters after the hearing. "This is about human beings."*

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report
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 under secretary 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 fund military

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

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.

Officials call on Pentagon to close more bases

Scripps News Service

July 18, 2005

The Pentagon's plan to shut down and consolidate U.S. military bases at home and overseas could cost taxpayers about as much as the Defense Department hopes to save, members of the independent base-closure commission said Monday.

Top military officials told the commission that base closures such as the closure of Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and changes such as re-designing Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina were needed and acceptable. But expanding the base-closure list could jeopardize the nation's ability to deter terrorism or prepare for future wars, they warned.

The Pentagon's short list of closures and realignments drew criticism from David M. Walker, head of the Government Accountability Office.

Walker warned during a Capitol Hill hearing that Pentagon spending is contributing to a growing financial instability in the United States. He encouraged the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to expand the list of closures and realignments to save larger amounts of money.

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

Walker said that the base closing and alignment proposals put forth by the Pentagon might save \$50 billion over 20 years, but that the price of the closures would be about \$12 billion. Walker said the actual cost of closing the bases, moving their functions and activities elsewhere, and restoring the environment at the base sites could consume even higher amounts of projected savings.

Commission members suggested that they favor alternatives than the Pentagon has suggested, including merging the Marine Corps basic training camps in southern California and Parris Island, S.C., into one complex.

They also raised questions about the Navy's decision to maintain the Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, rather than move its functions to Navy Shipyards at Norfolk, Kittery, Maryland, and Puget Sound, Wash.

Walker was skeptical about the Pentagon's decision to close the Portsmouth shipyard in Kittery. He noted that the action would result in the expected loss of skilled personnel associated with maintaining nuclear-powered submarines. He said the Navy has acknowledged that it takes eight years to develop those skills and that the skills will be needed at other shipyards.

Without resolving any issue, the commission and Pentagon officials discussed the Pentagon's recommendation of a package of closings and downsizing. The Defense Department said the package would result in closing 33 major bases and changing missions at 22 others.

The military officers who testified before the commission Monday raised concerns with a variety of proposed moves, contending, for example, that merging the two Marine training depots would hurt recruitment of young Marines.

Some of the Pentagon witnesses also expressed concerns about the Pentagon's own proposals, including moving more than 4,000 jobs from Point Mearns Air Force Base in North Carolina.

The witnesses pointed out that the cutbacks at Point Mearns had to be considered with operations at adjacent Fort Bragg, which is to get 4,200 more jobs under the Pentagon's proposal, but the issue was given only passing reference Monday.

The Pentagon witnesses and commission members also discussed, without resolving, such issues as whether a realignment of Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota would improve development of unmanned aircraft. They also explored complaints from state government officials that the reallocation of aircraft, personnel, facilities and missions of Air National Guard facilities would hamper a governor's ability to call on guard units to deal with natural disasters.

The commission is to decide Tuesday whether the Pentagon's list for closures and realignments should be expanded.

Retired Gen. **James Hill**, a commission member, warned that the military slow-down could be forced to close a facility that it might someday have to use.

"When we close these bases, we're not getting that back," Hill said.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

Retired Gen. Keith Martin, also a commissioner, said it was the same with overseas bases.

"Once we leave those countries we're not going back," he said. "Later you might say I wish I had that."

Michael Wynne, a Defense Department technology and procurement official who headed the Pentagon team that produced its base-closing package, said that changes to part of the list could disrupt the "comprehensive, integrated and interdependent" approach presented by the military.

Members of the BRAC commission are working under a law enacted in 1989 to identify military installations that could be dropped or changed to save money.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention in Guard, Reserves
National Journal's CongressDaily
May 17, 2005

Members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission questioned Pentagon leaders Monday about their recommendation to consolidate National Guard and Reserve bases around the country, stating that such a move might exacerbate the long-term recruitment and retention problems.

The decision, made as part of the 2005 base closure and realignment report, could threaten some troops' ability to report for weekend drill duties, commission members told Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers during a hearing on Capitol Hill.

"I really think you're going to have a serious problem," said former Rep. James Bilbray, D-Nev., one of nine BRAC commissioners.

Commission chairman Anthony Principi expressed similar concerns, but noted that the commissioners opposed the recommendations for the Reserve component. Retired Army Gen. James Hill called it a "momentous step forward."

After more than two years of analysis, the Pentagon announced Friday to shutter around 400 National Guard and Reserve installations, including 211 Army National Guard bases and 176 Army Reserve facilities. Plans call for the military to consolidate those into 117 new Armed Forces Centers scattered around the country.

The Pentagon also wants to move aircraft out of 22 Air National Guard units, leaving highly trained pilots and aircraft technicians with other missions. The aircraft could be moved to other Guard units.

During testimony, Pentagon officials said the decisions were made after consulting adjutant generals around the country, who largely backed the consolidation plan.

On Friday, National Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. Steven Bunn said he supports some recommendations, and he believed it could help boost recruitment if the closures occurred in recruitment-rich communities.

"We ought not think of population as static," Rumsfeld said Monday.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 1465

The goal, department officials said, is to lengthen troops' commutes to Guard and Reserve bases by no more than 50 miles.

Myers conceded, however, that the support of Blair and other high-ranking active-component officers "does not mean it's going to sit well with everyone."

The Reserve Officers Association has said it is concerned about the Pentagon's recommendations, and fears that the impact on travel time to drilling stations could be much more dramatic than expected.

"By closing so many facilities, reservists and Guardsmen may be required to travel hundreds of miles to drill every month," the association said in a statement. "Many of these are women and women ... may choose to leave the military. The result could be a loss of skills and experience the military desperately needs."

Officials at the National Guard Association of the United States still are analyzing the BRAC list and discussing the recommendations with adjutant generals around the country, according to a source. The decision regarding the Air National Guard is particularly vexing for the organization, with one state gaining from another's loss.

The closure of National Guard bases could add fuel to talk of lawsuits in Illinois and other states, based on a provision of federal law that requires a governor's permission to close a Guard facility.

The Pentagon "will try to satisfy folks who feel they have a legal case," but similar attempts at blocking closures in the past have not held up, said Michael Wynne, the department's undersecretary for acquisition, logistics and technology.

Meanwhile, commissioners said they are still awaiting 10 volumes of information from the Pentagon, which were not delivered as expected on Friday because of concerns over classified information. Pentagon officials will send those volumes to the commission by the end of the week, officials said.

The commission will review the Pentagon's decision throughout the summer, then submit its own list to the White House by Sept. 8.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention in Guard, Reserves
National Journal's CongressDaily
May 17, 2005

Members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission announced yesterday that Pentagon recommendations to keep open densely populated Air Force bases could devastate local economies. If the military does not technically shutter the facilities, the bases would be a "drain on host communities," blocking them from redeveloping the land for commercial purposes, BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said during a press briefing today. The military would have to spend Defense dollars "just to keep [the bases] warm," he added. Former Army Gen. James H. Mikow also noted that it might be better for these communities to close so [they] can begin to retool it, make something out of it.

Top service officials responded that several of the slated-down facilities, including Alaska's

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

Eielson Air Force Base and North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base will remain up and running largely for tests and training exercises, despite the loss of thousands of military and civilian personnel. The 5,500-acre North Dakota base, for instance, is ideal for unmanned aerial vehicle training flights because of a lack of competing commercial traffic. "It will host large-scale training exercises, officials said. It means at these installations, it is better to accommodate guest squadrons, providing the service with a more robust exercise capability," said Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper. Air Force officials assured communities that in many cases where a base is not technically closed, the service will turn over land -- including some airfields -- to surrounding communities. "We are bringing back the fence line to be able to accommodate a community," said acting Air Force Secretary Michael Dominguez. In addition to serving as training sites, the bases provide the Air Force with a "hedging strategy" if missions or force structure change dramatically, Dominguez said.

Today's BRAC hearing focused on Air Force facilities, and members read out Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's list of basing recommendations released Monday, which includes 30 Air Force bases slated for closure and another 62 targeted for realignment. With personnel and equipment moving from one base to another, the list affects 35 of the 104 Air Force installations. If the recommendations are implemented, the Air Force expects to save more than \$2 billion in personnel and infrastructure through 2011 and another \$1.2 billion each year after that.

The commission has less than four months to evaluate the secretary's recommendations and submit its list to the White House by Sept. 8. Commissioners still are waiting for the Pentagon to send thousands of pages of documents detailing the decisions and the reasoning behind them. The commission expected to see the documents Friday, though the Pentagon held them back because of concerns about classified information. Commissioners grilled Rumsfeld and other Pentagon leaders on the lack of information Monday and brought the matter up again during today's hearing. The commission will have the information at the end of the week, Pentagon officials said.

BRAC Gets Started With Intelligence Briefing On Threats
National Journal's CongressDaily
May 4, 2005

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission heard broad testimony Tuesday from top intelligence officials on current and future threats to the United States. It is the first of a four-month process that ultimately will decide the shape of domestic defense infrastructure.

"This is all part of the process to absorb information on [threat assessments you] understand their impact on the force structure," BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said after the hearing. He added that the testimony did not lead to any conclusions about which bases should close and which ones the military needs.

The open hearing was the panel's second on Tuesday; another session is planned for this morning. David Gordon, chairman of the national intelligence committee at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, led a panel of witnesses that include commission members of both state and non-state threats.

None of the members of the panel, which also included representatives from the State Department

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

and the Defense Intelligence Agency, could offer commanders some form of vision on which capabilities and installations the military will need to combat threats for the next 15 to 20 years.

However, the panel members stressed that unconventional tactics such as sabotage, terrorism, information attacks and weapons of mass destruction used by terrorists, insurgents and other non-state enemies might alter how the military fights its battles.

"They don't want to fight the American way of war," Gordon said. "Enemies try to level the playing field so we're unable to fight the way we want to fight."

International terrorism is continuing to grow and is becoming increasingly organized, with groups and individuals popping up around the world, Gordon said.

At the same time, the military must remain prepared to fight state enemies such as North Korea and Iran possibly posing serious threats to the United States and its allies for the next decade or longer. China and India, two rising political and military powers in Asia, also are areas to watch, Gordon said.

The nation's response to global threats "affects the U.S. military in dramatic ways and affects the work of this commission," said retired Army Gen. James Hill, a BRAC commission member. In particular, he said, the military might need to change the way it trains with increasing police and security forces.

The commission will meet again today to hear testimony from top Defense officials on a host of ongoing Pentagon studies, including the sweeping Quadrennial Defense Review and the Global Posture Review.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is expected to send his list of recommended base closings and realignments to Capitol Hill next week. The commission must analyze Rumsfeld's list and submit its own recommendations to the White House by Sept. 8.

Local News Articles

**Navy's Oceana Might Not Be Spared After All: Virginia Base Now On Closure List;
Officials Vow Effort to Keep It Open**

Richmond Times-Dispatch

July 20, 2005

Oceana Naval Air Station, the Navy's largest air base on the East Coast, is on the chopping block.

Thanks to one commissioner's late-minute vote, James the Base Realignment and Closure Commission decided yesterday to consider the Virginia Beach airfield as a base, despite previous objections by the Navy and local officials.

The vote puts Oceana in jeopardy, but now hearings and another vote wait until after a "closed" sign is posted.

Virginia officials expressed surprise that commissioners added the Navy field station, which employs more than 10,000 sailors and civilians and is home to 244 aircraft, to the list.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

recommendation to close 33 major bases and realign an additional 39 large installations.

Within minutes of the commission decision, the full spectrum of Virginia politicians -- from local officials to congressmen and the governor -- were holding news conferences and firing off news releases, all vowing to fight for the installation.

"I was shocked," said Rep. Thelma Drake, D-End, who attended the hearing. "I'm not in the clear, but it doesn't mean that Oceana will be closed."

Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf, who attended the hearing, said she was surprised that the panel added the base to the "hit" list, especially after Navy officials said Monday that the base should remain open.

The vote means the nine-member panel will consider Oceana when it deliberates on a final list of base closures in late August before submitting the list to President Bush by the end of the coming weeks, commissioners will visit the base and hold a public hearing to gather comments from local officials and residents.

Oceana looked safe until three weeks ago, when a ministerial Chairman Antonio Mucipipi asked Pentagon officials why the airfield had not been considered for closure or realignment.

Navy officials said Monday that they want to build a new naval airbase on the Virginia Coast within a decade but did not want to close Oceana now. The statement fueled the public discussion yesterday.

"This is the most perplexing and complex issue we face. We've got to help the navy figure out a solution [for Oceana]," said Commissioner James Hill.

The recusal of retired Navy Adm. William C. Gort, who lives in Virginia and is a part-time flip-flop by another commissioner hurt Oceana's chances.

Because federal law requires seven member votes to add a base to the list, the decision came down to one commissioner, former Transportation Secretary Samic Skinner.

Initially, Skinner expressed doubts about putting the base on the list but changed his mind moments before voting.

The resulting 7-1 vote was roundly criticized.

Sen. George Allen, R-Va., called it "mayoral show business and wasteful." Democratic Gov. Mark R. Warner said, "It appears that the facts have been ignored."

In addition to the Oceana decision, the panel voted to consider closing several other military facilities, including Marine's Naval Air Station Beaufort, the last active carrier aircraft carrier airbase in New England and one of the state's largest employers, and the Navy's waterfront regional headquarters in San Diego.

The commission rejected several additions to the BRAC list, including the Marine Corps' boot camp in San Diego and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii. Yesterday's decisions showed the

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

commission's independence from the Pentagon.

The panel "is not a rubber stamp," Principi said. That will

The hearing was also the last chance to put more bases on the closure list.

Gehman said communities with military bases not on the list "now can breathe a sigh of relief."

BASE CLOSURES; Holy City to give panel a head start BRAC offers "heavy lift team job after impressive presentation to save Navy facilities"

The State (South Carolina)

July 10, 2005

Although they made a strong case last month to save 300 Navy engineering jobs, Charleston's military supporters will not be idle waiting for the base-closing commission's final decision.

Instead, they will be helping the commission out

Charleston's presentation of a regional hearing on the base realignment and closure Commission (BRAC) impressed the panel's members so much that they asked Holy City officials to help the commission's analysts sort through the data

Not a problem, said Tom Mikolajcik, commander of the Charleston BRAC effort. "All the data we have is the Navy's reference. This is a problem they've slammed up."

Charleston officials already have turned over much of their studies and data to the base-closing commission and will be working with the panel's analysts.

Meeting in Charlotte, panelists offered hope for Charleston and other communities facing the Pentagon's ax.

"Just because we're leaving here today, that doesn't mean, Oh, well, that's it," said Philip Coyle, who chaired the June 28 hearing in Charlotte.

Charleston could lose up to 7,100 jobs if the Pentagon's recommendations are approved. Besides the engineering jobs, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also recommended military payroll and accounting offices be moved and jobs be transferred to the Naval Weapons Station.

Overall, South Carolina came up a winner. Charleston losses were offset by 1,800 jobs that will be added to Fort Jackson, McEntire Joint National Guard Base and Shaw Air Force Base, all in the Midlands.

One of the problems with the Defense Department's proposal to close facilities at South Naval Facilities Engineering Command is that the Navy never considered keeping what it left there, said Mikolajcik, a retired brigadier general and former commander at Charleston's Base Base.

"We heard two years ago that the Navy was going to pull the engineering jobs out of Jacksonville," Mikolajcik said.

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

Among the reasons the Navy offered for wanting to keep its engineering command in Charleston was that it was in a leased building, not on a secure military base.

But the Pentagon did not take into account that the command could be moved to a building that will be vacated shortly by Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said William Lewis, a retired Navy captain and the engineering command's former chief. The finance command meets post-9/11 security standards, he added.

Instead of spending \$57 million to move the command to Jacksonville, Fla., the Navy could save \$49 million by staying in Charleston, Lewis said.

That got the attention of the BRAC panel, which asked for more information and the help of Charleston's analysts.

One of the panel members, who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. James Hill, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, but we can do that."

Another panel member, retired Adm. Hal Gehman, said information like that "flowed by the Charleston contingent" gives us something to work on."

Panel members said their job is not to rubber-stamp the recommendations that the staff released May 13. Instead, they are to ensure the Pentagon followed the law in making its decisions.

"We are essentially a jury," Gehman said.

Charleston's hopes to save the engineering command from a tight deadline for a September commission votes Aug. 24 on what it will recommend to the president.

A simple majority of five votes is needed to take a base or facility off the closing list; a super majority of seven votes is required to add a base or facility to that list.

The commission's list is due on President Bush's desk by Sept. 8.

Bush can accept the panel's list, send it to Congress or reject it. He cannot add or subtract bases and neither can Congress, a BRAC spokesman said.

In the five previous base-closing rounds, 25 percent of the Pentagon's original recommendations were approved.

Thousands rally around Naval Station Ingleside Crowd, concert display support for targeted base

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

July 8, 2005

Supporters of local military bases put the city's culture on display Thursday at a welcoming ceremony for BRAC Commissioner James T. Hill.

Sounds of Tejano music filled the American Bank Center during a fundraising concert to draw an audience of supporters. As Hill took the stage to warm applause, the band began playing

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

"America the Beautiful." Yellow and blue lights flashed "Save Naval Station Ingleside." on the arena's marquee.

Hill, one of nine Base Realignment and Closure commissioners who will endorse the Defense Department's recommendation to close Naval Station Ingleside and move jobs from Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, said he was "touched" by the outpouring of support.

"We understand that this is about more than military value," he said. "This is about jobs and lives, your jobs and your lives. We're sensitive to that."

American Bank Center officials estimated attendance at about 2,500, leaving the arena three-fourths of the arena's nearly 90,000 seats empty.

U.S. Rep. Solomon Ortiz presented **Hill** with a petition to save the bases that collected more than 50,000 signatures. Mayor Henry Garrett and County Judge Terry Slamsie presented **Hill** with keys to the city and the county and with a proclamation asking that the bases be saved.

"We're here for one thing, and one thing only: to save Ingleside," Garrett said.

Delia Garcia, a counselor at Robstown High School, accompanied several students to the event to show support for the bases.

Sergio Villarreal, 18, a recent graduate, said he plans to join the military and attend college and wanted to send a message that the Ingleside base is worth keeping open.

"A lot of my friends plan on working at the base," he said.

Military-base supporters, lawmakers attend hearing in Charlotte, N.C.

The Charlotte Observer

June 29, 2005

Brenda Wilson of Havelock has traveled the East Coast in support of her local Marine Corps base and Naval Air Depot since 1988.

So it was a given that she would rise at 6 a.m. Tuesday, board a bus and head to Charlotte for the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's hearing on the future of military bases in the Carolinas and West Virginia. A real estate agent, her livelihood depends on military families. Her husband is a retired Marine.

But the Pentagon says such devotion is supposed to be a minor consideration.

The BRAC is an independent group that will make recommendations to President Bush and Congress for which bases to close or realign. Congress designed the base-closing process to "rationalize" the decision-making and reduce the often conflicting political and economic passions, says Paul Taibl, director of policy with Business Executives for National Security, a Washington group that encourages communities to reduce their dependence on local bases.

Congress can only vote yes or no on BRAC's entire set of recommendations. It cannot modify the recommendations.

Pres. Comments
Commissioner Hill
5-14-2005

Commissioners are supposed to focus on "military value," according to Defense Department criteria. Economic impact ranks No. 6 out of eight criteria.

But lawmakers usually talk about base closings in the form of lost jobs and the tribulations that displaced families would face.

On Tuesday, the conversation took a different turn, with N.C. lawmakers focusing on the technical, military terms.

More than 400 supporters and a dozen top Carolinas lawmakers attended the hearing in a conference room at Central Piedmont Community College's west campus. The 100 members listened to more than four hours of testimony.

Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., spoke about operational readiness. A retired aviator general from Pope Air Force Base praised the base's ability to "take on and surge."

Still, the heart of the issue -- the jobs that a military base provides -- was reflected in the busloads of people who rose in the wee hours to travel to the hearing from most of the 100 North Carolina communities whose lifeline depends on the military's presence.

"If it weren't for the military, the town would fall into the ocean," said Barbara Coleman, a resident of Havelock who, like Wilson, would usually travel to support "our" base.

Indeed, the military has become an important economic driver for North Carolina, pumping an estimated \$ 18 billion into the economy each year. In Havelock, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and the Naval Air Depot are estimated to provide one in four jobs for the region. Those jobs pay upwards of \$ 50,000 a year, easily the best-paying ones east of I-85.

As Gov. Mike Easley told BRAC commissioners, "Our economy depends on having military presence in this state."

The Carolinas fared relatively well when the Pentagon released its list of significant base closings and downsizings earlier this year, losing only two bases, none of them major. The Naval Air Depot stands to lose more than 600 of its 3,000 jobs under the Pentagon's proposal.

On Tuesday, N.C. lawmakers took a defensive stance -- reminding the commission of how N.C. bases have contributed to the nation's military successes.

They also asked for more, more missions and more personnel at various bases.

BRAC Commissioner James Hill, a retired general, conceded that economic issues lurk in the background.

"We understand it's a whole lot more than just fighter planes and bombers," Hill said to reporters after the hearing. "This is about human beings."

Opinions/ Editorials

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
8-24-07

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

National News Articles

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report

July 20, 2005

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

Officials call on Pentagon to close more bases

Scripps News Service

July 18, 2005

*Retired Gen. **James Hill**, a commission member, warned that the military should not be forced to close a facility that it might someday have to use.*

"When we close these bases, we're not getting them back," Hill said.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention In Guard, Reserves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

*Commission chairman Anthony Principi expressed similar concerns, but not all of the commissioners opposed the recommendations for the Reserve component. Retired Army Gen. **James Hill** called it a "monumental step forward."*

Air Force Might Keep Bases Open After Personnel Moves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

*Former Army Gen. **James Hill** likewise noted that it might be "better for these communities to close so [they] can begin to retool it, make something out of it."*

BRAC Gets Started With Intelligence Briefing On Threats

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 4, 2005

*The nation's response to global threats "affects the U.S. military in dramatic ways and affects the work of this commission," said retired Army Gen. **James Hill**, a BRAC commissioner. In particular, he said, the military might need to change the way it trains troops, increasing police and security forces.*

Local News Articles

**Navy's Oceana Might Not Be Spared After All; Virginia Base Now On Closure List;
Officials Vow Effort to Keep It Open**

Richmond Times-Dispatch

July 20, 2005

*One of the panel members who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. **James Hill**, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, "but we can do that."*

BASE CLOSURES; Holy City to give panel a hand; BRAC offers Charleston team job after impressive presentation to save Navy facilities

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

The State (South Carolina)

July 10, 2005

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Thousands rally around Naval Station Ingleside Crowd, concert display support for targeted base

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

July 8, 2005

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Military-base supporters, lawmakers attend hearing in Charlotte, N.C.

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June 29, 2005

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Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

Commission adds Brunswick, Oceana to BRAC lists

Aerospace Daily and Defense Report

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

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

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.

Officials call on Pentagon to close more bases

Scripps News Service
July 18, 2005

The Pentagon's plan to shut down and consolidate U.S. military bases at home and overseas could cost taxpayers about as much as the Defense Department hopes to save, members of the independent base-closure commission said Monday.

Top military officials told the commission that base closures such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and changes such as downsizing Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina were needed and acceptable. But expanding the base-closure list could jeopardize the nation's ability to deter terrorism or prepare for future wars, they warned.

The Pentagon's short list of closures and realignments drew criticism from David M. Walker, head of the Government Accountability Office.

Walker warned during a Capitol Hill hearing that Pentagon spending is contributing to a growing financial instability in the United States. He encouraged the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to expand the list of closures and realignments to save larger amounts of money.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

Walker said that the base closing and alignment proposals put forth by the Pentagon might save \$50 billion over 20 years, but that the price of the changes would be at least \$24 billion. Walker said the actual cost of closing the bases, moving their functions and personnel elsewhere, and restoring the environment at the base sites could consume even higher amounts of projected savings.

Commission members suggested that they favor deeper cuts than the Pentagon has suggested, including merging the Marine Corps basic training camps in southern California and Parris Island, S.C., into one complex.

They also raised questions about the Navy's decision to maintain the Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, rather than move its functions to Navy shipyards at Norfolk, Kittery, Maine, and Puget Sound, Wash.

Walker was skeptical about the Pentagon's decision to close the Portsmouth shipyard in Kittery. He noted that the action would result in the "expected loss of skilled personnel associated with maintaining nuclear-powered submarines." He said the Navy has acknowledged that it takes eight years to develop those skills and that the skills will be needed at other shipyards.

Without resolving any issue, the commission and Pentagon officials discussed the Pentagon's recommendation of a package of closings and downsizing. The Defense Department said the package would result in closing 33 major bases and changing missions at 29 others.

The military officers who testified before the commission Monday raised problems with a variety of proposed moves, contending, for example, that merging the two Marine training depots would hurt recruitment of young Marines.

Some of the Pentagon witnesses also expressed concerns about the Pentagon's own proposals, including moving more than 4,000 jobs from Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina.

The witnesses pointed out that the cutbacks at Pope had to be considered with operations at adjacent Fort Bragg, which is to get 4,200 more jobs under the Pentagon's proposal. But the issue was given only passing reference Monday.

The Pentagon witnesses and commission members also discussed, without resolving, such issues as whether a realignment of Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota would hamper development of unmanned aircraft. They also explored complaints from state government officials that the re-allocation of aircraft, personnel, facilities and missions of Air National Guard facilities would hamper a governor's ability to call on guardsmen to deal with natural disasters.

The commission is to decide Tuesday whether the Pentagon's list for closures and realignments should be expanded.

Retired Gen. **James Hill**, a commission member, warned that the military should not be forced to close a facility that it might someday have to use.

"When we close these bases, we're not getting them back," Hill said.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

Retired Gen. Keith Martin, also a commissioner, said it was the same with overseas bases.

"Once we leave those countries we're not going back," he said. "Later you might say I wish I had that."

Michael Wynne, a Defense Department technology and procurement official who headed the Pentagon team that produced its base-closing package, said that changes to part of the list could disrupt the "comprehensive, integrated and interdependent" approach present in the military.

Members of the BRAC commission are working under a law enacted in 1996 to identify military installations that could be dropped or changed to save money.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention In Guard, Reserves

National Journal's CongressDaily

May 17, 2005

Members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission questioned Pentagon leaders Monday about their recommendation to consolidate National Guard and Reserve bases around the country, stating that such a move might exacerbate the bases' recruitment and retention problems.

The decision, made as part of the 2005 base closure and realignment round, could strain some troops' ability to report for weekend drill duties, commission members told Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers during a hearing on Capitol Hill.

"I really think you're going to have a serious problem," said former Rep. James Bilbray, D-Nev., one of nine BRAC commissioners.

Commission chairman Anthony Principi expressed similar concerns, but not all of the commissioners opposed the recommendations for the Reserve component. Former Army Gen. James Hill called it a "momentous step forward."

After more than two years of analysis, the Pentagon announced Friday it wants to shutter around 400 National Guard and Reserve installations, including 211 Army National Guard bases and 176 Army Reserve facilities. Plans call for the military to consolidate those into 125 new Armed Forces Centers scattered around the country.

The Pentagon also wants to move aircraft out of 22 Air National Guard units, leaving highly trained pilots and aircraft technicians with other missions. The aircraft would be moved to other Guard units.

During testimony, Pentagon officials said the decisions were made after consulting adjutant generals around the country, who largely backed the consolidation plan.

On Friday, National Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. Steven Bram said he supported the recommendations, and believed it could help boost new recruits if the centers are located in recruitment-rich communities.

"We ought not think of population as static," Rumsfeld said Monday.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005

The goal, department officials said, is to 'lengthen troops' commutes to Guard and Reserve bases by no more than 50 miles.

Myers conceded, however, that the support of Blum and other high-ranking reserve component officers "does not mean it's going to sit well with everyone."

The Reserve Officers Association has said it is concerned about the Pentagon's recommendations, and fears that the impact on travel time to drilling stations could be much more dramatic than expected.

"By closing so many facilities, reservists and Guardsmen may be required to travel hundreds of miles to drill every month," the association said in a statement. "Many of these servicemen and women ... may choose to leave the military. The result could be a loss of skills and experience the military desperately needs."

Officials at the National Guard Association of the United States still are analyzing the BRAC list and discussing the recommendations with adjutant generals around the country, according to a source. The decision regarding the Air National Guards is particularly tricky for the organization, with one state gaining from another's loss.

The closure of National Guard bases could add fuel to talk of lawsuits in Illinois and other states, based on a provision of federal law that requires a governor's permission to close a Guard facility.

The Pentagon "will try to satisfy folks who feel they have a legal case," but make attempts at blocking closures in the past have not held up, said Michael Wynne, the deputy assistant undersecretary for acquisition, logistics and technology.

Meanwhile, commissioners said they are still awaiting 10 volumes of information from the Pentagon, which were not delivered as expected on Friday because of concerns over classified information. Pentagon officials will send those volumes to the commission by the end of the week, officials said.

The commission will review the Pentagon's decision throughout the summer and submit its own list to the White House by Sept. 8.

BRAC Commissioners Worry About Retention In Guard, Reserves
National Journal's Congress Daily
May 17, 2005

Members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission aired concerns today that Pentagon recommendations to keep open drastically stripped-down Air Force bases could devastate local economies. If the military does not technically shutter the facilities, the bases would be a "drain on host communities," blocking them from redeveloping the land for commercial purposes, BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said during a public hearing today. The military would have to spend Defense dollars "just to keep [the bases] warm," he added. Former Army Gen. James M. McKewen noted that it might be "better for these communities to close so [they] can begin to retool it, make something out of it."

Top service officials responded that several of the scaled-down facilities, including Alaska's

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2015

Eielson Air Force Base and North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base, would remain up and running largely for tests and training exercises, despite the loss of thousands of military and civilian personnel. The 4,500-acre North Dakota base, for instance, is ideal for unmanned aerial vehicle training flights because of a lack of competing commercial traffic. Eielson, too, will host large-scale training exercises, officials said. Hangars at these installations can accommodate guest squadrons, providing the service with a more robust exercise capability, said Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper. Air Force officials assured commissioners that in many cases where a base is not technically closed, the service will turn over land – including some airfields – to surrounding communities. "We are bringing back the fence line to be able to cede real property," said acting Air Force Secretary Michael Dominguez. In addition to serving as training sites, the bases provide the Air Force with a "hedging strategy" if missions or force structure change dramatically, Dominguez said.

Today's BRAC hearing focused on Air Force facilities, and members analyzed Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's list of basing recommendations released Friday, which includes 10 Air Force bases slated for closure and another 62 targeted for realignment. With personnel and equipment moving from one base to another, the list affects 115 of the 134 Air Force installations. If the recommendations are implemented, the Air Force expects to save more than \$1.5 billion in personnel and infrastructure through 2011 and another \$1.2 billion each year thereafter.

The commission has less than four months to evaluate the secretary's recommendations and submit its list to the White House by Sept. 8. Commissioners still are waiting for the Pentagon to send thousands of pages of documents detailing the decisions and the reasoning behind them. The commission expected to see the documents Friday, though the Pentagon held them back because of concerns about classified information. One commissioner grilled Rumsfeld and other Pentagon leaders on the lack of information Monday and brought the matter up again during today's hearing. The commission will have the information by the end of the week, Pentagon officials said.

BRAC Gets Started With Intelligence Briefing On Threats
National Journal's CongressDaily
May 4, 2005

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission heard testimony Tuesday from top intelligence officials on current and future threats to the United States, a first in a four-month process that ultimately will decide the shape of domestic defense infrastructure.

"This is all part of the process to absorb information, get threat assessments [and understand] their impact on the force structure," BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said at the hearing. He added that the testimony did not lead to any conclusions about which bases should close and which ones the military needs.

The open hearing was the panel's second on Tuesday; another session is planned for this morning. David Gordon, chairman of the national intelligence committee at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, led a panel of witnesses that gave the commission a rundown of both state and non-state threats.

None of the members of the panel, which also included representatives from the State Department

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2005**

and the Defense Intelligence Agency, could offer commissioners specific information on which capabilities and installations the military will need to combat threats for the next 5 to 20 years.

However, the panel members stressed that unconventional tactics such as satellite terrorism, information attacks and weapons of mass destruction used by terrorists, insurgents and other non-state enemies might alter how the military fights its battles.

"They don't want to fight the American way of war," Gordon said. "Enemies try to level the playing field so we're unable to fight the way we want to fight."

International terrorism is continuing to grow and is becoming increasingly decentralized, with groups and individuals popping up around the world, Gordon said.

At the same time, the military must remain prepared to fight state enemies, such as North Korea and Iran possibly posing serious threats to the United States and its allies for the next decade or longer. China and India, two rising political and military powers in Asia, also are areas to watch, Gordon said.

The nation's response to global threats "affects the U.S. military in dramatic ways and affects the work of this commission," said retired Army Gen. James Hill, a BRAC commissioner. In particular, he said, the military might need to change the way it trains troops, increasing police and security forces.

The commission will meet again today to hear testimony from top Defense officials on a host of ongoing Pentagon studies, including the sweeping Quadrennial Defense Review and the Global Posture Review.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is expected to read his list of recommended base closings and realignments to Capitol Hill next week. The commission must analyze Rumsfeld's list and submit its own recommendations to the White House by Sept. 8.

Local News Articles

**Navy's Oceana Might Not Be Spared After All: Virginia Base Now On Closure List;
Officials Vow Effort to Keep It Open**

Richmond Times-Dispatch

July 20, 2005

Oceana Naval Air Station, the Navy's largest airbase on the East Coast, is on the chopping block.

Thanks to one commissioner's last-minute vote change, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission decided yesterday to consider the Virginia Beach airfield for closure despite previous objections by the Navy and local officials.

The vote puts Oceana in jeopardy, but more hearings and another vote may be required before a "closed" sign is posted.

Virginia officials expressed surprise that commissioners added the Navy base, which employs more than 10,000 sailors and civilians and is home to 244 aircraft, to the Pentagon's

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2015

recommendation to close 33 major bases and realign an additional 30 large installations.

Within minutes of the commission decision, the full spectrum of Virginia politicians -- from local officials to congressmen and the governor -- were holding news conferences and firing off news releases, all vowing to fight for the installation.

"I was shocked," said Rep. Thelma Drake, R-Clay who attended the hearing. "We're not in the clear, but it doesn't mean that Oceana will be closed."

Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf, who attended the hearing, said she was surprised that the panel added the base to the "hit" list, especially after Navy officials said Monday that the base should remain open.

The vote means the nine-member panel will consider Oceana when it deliberates on a final list of base closures in late August before submitting the list to President Bush by Sept. 15. In coming weeks, commissioners will visit the base and hold a public hearing to gather comments from local officials and residents.

Oceana looked safe until three weeks ago, when committee Chairman Anthony Principi asked Pentagon officials why the airfield had not been considered for closure or realignment.

Navy officials said Monday that they want to build a new naval airbase on the East Coast within a decade but did not want to close Oceana now. The statement fueled the panel's discussion yesterday.

"This is the most perplexing and complex issue we face. We've got to help the Navy figure out a solution [for Oceana]," said Commissioner James Hill.

The recusal of retired Navy Adm. William Gethman, who lives in Virginia, had a last-minute flip-flop by another commissioner hurt Oceana chances.

Because federal law requires seven members' votes to add a base to the list, the decision came down to one commissioner, former Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner.

Initially, Skinner expressed doubts about putting the base on the list but changed his mind moments before voting.

The resulting 7-1 vote was roundly criticized.

Sen. George Allen, R-Va., called it "illogical, shortsighted and wasteful." Democratic Gov. Mark R. Warner said, "It appears that the facts have been ignored."

In addition to the Oceana decision, the panel voted to consider closing seven other military facilities, including Major Naval Air Station Brunswick, the last active-duty military airbase in New England and one of the state's largest employers, and the Navy's waterfront regional headquarters in San Diego.

The commission rejected several additions to the BRAC list, including the Marine Corps' boot camp in San Diego and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii. Yesterday's decision showed the

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2013

commission's independence from the Pentagon.

The panel "is not a rubber stamp," Principi said afterward.

The hearing was also the last chance to put more bases on the closure list.

Gehman said communities with military bases not on the list "now can breathe a sigh of relief."

BASE CLOSURES; Holy City to give panel a hand; BRAC offers Charleston team job after impressive presentation to save Navy facilities

The State (South Carolina)

July 10, 2005

Although they made a strong case last month to save 800 Navy engineering jobs, Charleston's military supporters will not be idle waiting for the base-closing commission's final decision.

Instead, they will be helping the commission out.

Charleston's presentation at a regional hearing of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) impressed the panel's members so much that they asked Holy City leaders to help the commission's analysts sort through the data.

Not a problem, said Tom Mikolajcik, co-chair of the Charleston BRAC effort. "All the data we have is the Navy's information. This is not something we drummed up."

Charleston officials already have turned over much of their studies and data to the base-closing commission and will be working with the panel's analysts.

Meeting in Charlotte, panelists offered hope for Charleston and other communities facing the Pentagon's axe.

"Just because we're leaving here today, that doesn't mean, Oh, well, that's it," said Philip Coyle, who chaired the June 28 hearing in Charlotte.

Charleston could lose up to 1,100 jobs if the Pentagon's recommendations are approved. Besides the engineering jobs, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also recommended a military payroll and accounting office removal and jobs be trimmed from the Naval Weapons Station.

Overall, South Carolina came up a winner. Charleston's losses were offset by 1,300 jobs that will be added to Fort Jackson, McEntire Joint National Ground Base and Shaw Air Force Base, all in the Midlands.

One of the problems with the Defense Department's proposal to close Charleston's South Naval Facilities Engineering Command is that the Navy never considered keeping the facility there, said Mikolajcik, a retired brigadier general and former commander at Charleston Air Force Base.

"We heard two years ago that the Navy wanted to put (the engineering command) in Jacksonville," Mikolajcik said.

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2015

Among the reasons the Navy offered for moving the engineering command from Charleston was that it was in a leased building, not on a secure military base.

But the Pentagon did not take into account that the command could be moved into a building that will be vacated shortly by Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said William Lewis, a retired Navy captain and the engineering command's former chief. The finance building meets post-9/11 security standards, he added.

Instead of spending \$57 million to move the command to Jacksonville, Fla., the Navy could save \$49 million by staying in Charleston, Lewis said.

That got the attention of the BRAC panel, which asked for more information and the help of Charleston's analysts.

One of the panel members who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. James Hill, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, "but we can do that."

Another panel member, retired Adm. Hal G. Hanna, said information like that offered by the Charleston contingent "gives us something to work on."

Panel members said they do not have the authority to rubber-stamp the recommendations that Rumsfeld released May 13. Instead, they are to ensure the Pentagon followed the law in making its decisions.

"We are essentially a judge," Gehman said.

Charleston's hopes to save the engineering command face a tight deadline. The nine-member commission votes Aug. 24 on what it will recommend to the president.

A simple majority of five votes is needed to take a base or facility off the closing list; a super majority of seven votes is required to add a base or facility to that list.

The commission's list is due on President Bush's desk by Sept. 8.

Bush can accept the panel's list, send it to Congress, or reject it. He cannot add or subtract bases and neither can Congress, a BRAC spokesman said.

In the five previous base-closing rounds, 75 percent of the Pentagon's original recommendations were approved.

Thousands rally around Naval Station byeside Crowd, concert display support for targeted base

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

July 8, 2005

Supporters of local military bases put the city's culture on display Thursday in a welcoming ceremony for BRAC Commissioner James Hill.

Sounds of Tejano music filled the American Band Center during a free concert meant to draw an audience of supporters. As Hill took the stage to warm applause, the band began playing

**Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2015**

"America the Beautiful" Yellow and blue fabric banner, "Save Naval Station Ingleside." on the arena's marquee.

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Military-base supporters, lawmakers attend hearing in Charlotte, N.C.

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June 29, 2005

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BRAC 2015**

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But lawmakers usually talk about base closings in the form of lost jobs and the burdens that displaced families would face.

On Tuesday, the conversation took a different tack, with N.C. lawmakers largely talking in technical, military terms.

More than 400 supporters and a dozen top Carolinian lawmakers attended the hearing in a conference room at Central Piedmont Community College's west campus. BRAC members listened to more than four hours of testimony.

Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., spoke about operational readiness. A retired lieutenant general from Pope Air Force Base praised the base's ability to "mobilize and surge."

Still, the heart of the issue -- the jobs that a military base provides -- was reflected in the busloads of people who rose in the wee hours to travel to Raleigh from mostly rural western North Carolina communities whose lifeblood depends on the military's presence.

"If it weren't for the military, the town would fall into the ocean," said Barbara White-man, a resident of Havelock who, like Wilson, will gladly travel to support "our" Marines.

Indeed, the military has become an important economic driver for North Carolina, pumping an estimated \$ 18 billion into the economy each year. In Havelock, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and the Naval Air Depot are estimated to provide one in four jobs for the region. Those jobs pay upwards of \$ 50,000 a year, easily the best-paying ones east of I-85.

As Gov. Mike Easley told BRAC commissioners: "Our economy depends on a strong military presence in this state."

The Carolinas fared relatively well when the Pentagon released its list of suggested base closings and downsizings earlier this year, losing only 15 of 143 jobs, none of them major. The Naval Air Depot stands to lose more than 600 of its 3,800 jobs under the Pentagon's proposal.

On Tuesday, N.C. lawmakers took a defensive stance -- reminding the commission of how N.C. bases have contributed to the nation's military successes.

They also asked for more, more missions and more personnel at various bases.

BRAC Commissioner James Hill, a retired general, concluded that economics always lurk in the background.

"We understand this is a whole lot more than dollar figures, planes and bases," Hill said to reporters after the hearing. "This is about human beings."

Opinions/ Editorials

Press Comments
Commissioner Hill
BRAC 2015