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THE
NEW ENGLAND
COUNCIL

June 30, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi, Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

07052005

Re: Base Realignment and Closure in New England

Dear Chairman Principi:

As the nation's oldest regional business organization dedicated to promoting economic development and a high quality of life in the six-state region, The New England Council writes in support of keeping New England's military facilities open. Because of prior base closures, New England's military infrastructure is already extremely small. Pursuant to the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommendation, three significant military bases (Naval Submarine Base New London, Portsmouth Naval Yard and Otis Air National Guard Base) would be closed and another facility (Naval Air Station Brunswick) would be realigned. DOD's recommendation would require military personnel cutbacks in New England that are much larger than any other region. The already small military presence in New England has a detrimental effect on the region and on our nation's military. These consequences should not be exacerbated by adoption of DOD's recommendation to close and realign significant facilities in New England. Starting with the Revolutionary War, New England has a proud tradition of hosting our nation's military. The Council and the citizens of New England remain committed to continuing that tradition.

I. New England's Military Presence has been Disproportionately Reduced in Prior Base Closings and Realignments and its Military Presence is Disproportionately Small.

New England has experienced disproportionately deeper reductions in military personnel and infrastructure than other regions in the prior base closing and realignments in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995. According to statistics compiled by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, from September 1987 to September 2002, the number of active duty military personnel based in New England dropped from 30,600 to 12,700, a reduction of 58%. New England's reduction in active duty personnel during this period exceeded reductions in all other regions and greatly exceeded the national average, which was

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24%. For example, the Western region suffered a reduction of only 29.8% and the Southern region a reduction of 15.3%. Three (Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire) of the 11 states in which military personnel declined by more than 50% from 1987 to 2002 are located in New England. New Hampshire suffered the steepest decline of military personnel of any state in the country, *losing an amazing 92.1% of its military personnel over the 15 year period.*

New England's military infrastructure has also seen a disproportionately large reduction. In 1987, New England's active duty personnel made up approximately 2% of the U.S. based force. However, during the four previous rounds of base closing and realignments, 5.3% (five out of 93) of the major bases closed or realigned have been located in New England and 7.1% (28 out of 384) of the total bases closed or realigned have been located in New England.

As a result of reductions in the military since 1987, New England's military presence in terms of personnel and infrastructure is disproportionately small. As of 2002, about 5% of the nation's population lived in the six New England states. However, only 1.2% of the nation's active duty military personnel is based in New England. Furthermore, every New England states' percentage of military personnel lags its share of population in the United States. Most notably, Massachusetts makes up 2.4% of the population of the United States, but only .2% of the nation's active duty military personnel are based in Massachusetts.

New England's military infrastructure is also disproportionately small. According to the Department of Defense's most recent *Base Structure Report, not one of the 93 "large installations"* -- defined as having a total property replacement value of greater than $1.553 billion -- *located in the United States is located in New England.* Although the New England region lacks a "large installation", a number of states outside New England have multiple "large installations" including Georgia which has five large installations, Maryland with four and Oklahoma with three. Moreover, only three of the 99 "medium installations" are located in New England.

II. New England Would Suffer a Disproportionate Share of the Military Cutbacks Pursuant to DOD's 2005 Recommendation.

The six New England states would lose 14,442 DOD personnel if DOD's recommendation is adopted. Although New England contains approximately 5% of the nation's population and only 1.2% of active duty military personnel, New England would suffer approximately 25% of the losses among all the states that suffered job losses under DOD's plan. These losses greatly outweigh the losses of any other region. The Mid-Atlantic and Southern regions would gain personnel, whereas the Midwest would only lose 955 jobs and the 20 states that make up the Western region would lose approximately 2,000 less jobs than New England. In fact, New England would lose more jobs (14,442) either through permanent loss or transfer to another region than the Pentagon proposes cutting permanently nationwide (12,428). Connecticut would lose the most personnel of any state in the Union and Maine would be second.

If enacted, DOD's recommendation would have severe economic consequences for New England. According to statistics provided by Connecticut Unites, the closure of the Submarine Base New London would mean the loss of 14,000 jobs (DOD personnel and contractors) in Connecticut and Connecticut's Gross State Product (GSP) would decrease $1.3 billion annually. Of course, the move of Electric Boat, a main military contractor, from Connecticut would greatly exacerbate these losses. Connecticut Unites estimates that the closure of the Base and the loss of Electric Boat would mean that Connecticut would lose more than 31,500 jobs and Connecticut's GSP would decrease $3.3 billion annually.

The closure of the Portsmouth Naval Yard and the realignment of the Naval Air Station Brunswick would have severe economic impacts on both Maine and New Hampshire. Besides the DOD personnel losses that have already been mentioned, New Hampshire would lose 1,219 jobs in the secondary effects of the Naval Yard's closure and New Hampshire's GSP would fall $133.8 million if the shipyard closes according to the New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. In Maine, the closure of the Portsmouth Naval Yard would lead to a loss of $314 million in total earnings per year and the realignment of the Brunswick Naval Air Station would cost Maine another $296 million in total earnings per year.

III. New England's Small Military Presence Has Consequences that Will be Exacerbated if DOD's Recommendation is Adopted.

The consequences of New England's small military presence have negative effects that will only be greatly exacerbated if DOD's recommendation to close and realign significant New England facilities is adopted. DOD and the Base Realignment and Closure Commission must give priority consideration to military value in selecting installations for closure or realignment. New England's small military presence cannot be reduced further without impacting military readiness and mission capabilities.

A. The Ability to Protect New England in Homeland Defense Missions may be Compromised if DOD's Recommendation is Adopted.

The BRAC criteria requires DOD to consider "the availability of land, facilities and associated airspace . . . and staging areas for use of the Armed Forces in homeland defense missions." One of the BRAC principles provides that that DOD "needs its force structure organized, equipped, and *located to* match the demands of the National Military Strategy." After the events of September 11, DOD has emphasized its homeland defense role and noted that it must provide defense against direct attacks to the United States, civil support to the nation and enable activities to improve capabilities for homeland security. Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul McHale, in testimony before a House subcommittee in March, noted the importance of the military responding quickly in its homeland defense missions. However, the United States General Accounting Office in 2003 found that "DOD's force structure is not well tailored to perform domestic military missions . . ."

In support of its recommendation, DOD has indicated the need to shift from a Cold War military with domestic bases located to perform missions in Europe to a force that is better prepared to handle terrorism and regional conflicts. However, the military's presence in a region is important to defending the region in this current environment of unconventional threats, especially terrorism. As a location of major financial centers in Boston, Providence and Hartford and with its proximity to New York City, New England remains a potential target of terrorism. Because New England's military presence has been severely reduced in prior base closing rounds, the region cannot afford further closures without compromising the region's security.

DOD's recommendations would threaten New England's security. The creation of the North American Aerospace Defense Command has demonstrated the importance of air defense to our nation's homeland security. However, DOD's recommendation would gut New England's air defenses. DOD recommends significantly realigning New England's only active duty military airfield -- the Brunswick Naval Air Station -- and closing Otis Air National Guard Base, which provided the fighter jets that were first to arrive on the scene in New York City on September 11. Both bases must remain open in order to defend New England from emergent threats like cruise missile attacks from offshore.

Likewise, the closure of the Submarine Base New London and the Portsmouth Naval Yard would have severe homeland defense consequences for New England. The unannounced routines of the submarines leaving from New London provide strong deterrents to maritime terrorist attacks on the Northeast. The Base also plays a role in the defense of the United States Coast Guard Academy and the Millstone Nuclear Power Station. The Portsmouth Naval Yard is located further north and east than any other Navy-owned ship and submarine repair facility and therefore is an ideal facility for Homeland Defense missions. The Yard is already providing homeporting services for the United States Coast Guard and is collaborating with the Coast Guard to provide additional protection for the Port of Portsmouth and the surrounding communities.

Just as the nation's military priority has shifted away from Europe and the Atlantic Ocean, it is possible that the nation's military priority may shift back to these locations once again. Given the realities of development -- especially coastal development -- in New England, it is likely that the military by closing Submarine Base New London, Portsmouth Naval Yard and Otis Air National Guard Base is forfeiting these strategic locations along New England's coast forever. With military expansion in New England at new sites potentially cost prohibitive and logistically impossible, the closure of these bases may mean that DOD will be unable to shift its forces back to New England to meet its needs in the future.

B. Minimal Military Presence in New England will Hurt the Military's Technology Capabilities.

The military must maintain a presence in New England in order to take advantage of New England's technology and academic cluster. One of the BRAC principles provides:

> The Department (DOD) needs to retain, or make available within the private sector, research, development, acquisition, test and evaluation capabilities. *These functions must efficiently and effectively place superior technology in the hands of the warfighter to meet current and future threats and facilitate knowledge-enabled and net-centric warfare.*

Military technology facilities are crucial to the strategic realignment of U.S. warfighting forces and the future development of advanced technology defense systems is dependent on military bases' proximity to technology clusters. New England is the home of the world's greatest technology clusters with federally-funded research and development centers, cutting-edge academic expertise and a concentration of high-tech industrial partners. Four of New England's six states rank in the top 12 on the 2004 Milken Institute State Technology and Science Index with Massachusetts -- the home of Otis Air National Guard Base -- ranked first in the nation. This Index ranks states on research and development inputs, technology and science workforce and technology concentration and dynamism.

Adopting DOD's recommendation to close New England's bases may have the effect of lessening the military's technological warfighting ability. For example, pursuant to DOD's recommendation, many of the activities that take place at Submarine Base New London will be relocated to Kings Bay, Georgia. However, Kings Bay lacks the competitive, technology savvy workforce that exists in New London, Connecticut. More than 26% of New London County's adult population holds a bachelor's degree compared with only 16% in Camden County Georgia. New London County is home to six higher education institutions, whereas Camden County has only one community college and no four-year universities.

C. The Lack of a Military Presence in New England Hurts Military Recruitment.

Criteria that DOD and BRAC are considering in the base closure and realignment process includes "readiness of total force" and "manpower implications." New England is home to five percent of the country's population and Boston is the seventh largest metropolitan area in the country; yet, the region's small military presence hurts efforts to recruit in New England. This is a crucial issue in a time when the military is having difficulty recruiting personnel, especially in New England. A 2001 study showed that four out of every five high schools in New England deny access to at least two military branches for recruitment purposes and that military recruitment suffered as a result. Military personnel and infrastructure are not common sites in New England and therefore potential recruits are likely much more wary of joining something for which they are not familiar. Further closures of New England military bases would exacerbate this situation.

The New England region has a proud tradition of housing and supporting our nation's military. In continuing that support, we offer our comments with the belief that in taking our comments into consideration, the base realignment and closure process will leave our military in a stronger position to defend our nation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James T. Brett

cc: New England Congressional Delegation
New England Governors