

Congressman Ed Case
 Prince Kuhio Federal Building, Room 5-104
 Box 50124
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96850

Dear Congressman Case:

Please consider my thoughts regarding the proposed Department of Defense (DOD) Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) of the Human Resources Service Center Pacific (PAC) located in Honolulu.

The PAC is one of seven Department of Navy (DON) Human Resources Service Centers (Centers), reporting to the DON's Office of Civilian Human Resources. The Centers were established as part of the DON's regionalization effort beginning in 1996. The PAC was the first Center. BRAC proposes to transfer PAC's work to the Centers at the North and South West. These Centers will need about 20 additional billets each to absorb PAC's work. The PAC has 65 employees at the present time. In 1996, the PAC had 106 employees.

Why should the PAC be removed from the BRAC list? A Jerry Burris article in the Advertiser on 22 May 05 called the Pacific the "center of gravity of American concern". The possibility of home porting a carrier battle group at Pearl Harbor adds to the idea the Pacific is a critically strategic area now and in the future. The battle group will require the establishment of new activities, the upgrading of existing activities, and the build up of military and civilian manpower in Hawaii.

The PAC can play a key role in this buildup. Long range servicing has been successful, e.g., PAC services activities in Japan and Okinawa and the HRSC North West services activities in the Washington D.C. area. However, they have not experienced the kind of build up of manpower the battle group promises, at least not from long range. The presence of PAC in Hawaii promises the vital close and continuing coordination with the Hawaii Human Resource Offices (HRO's) and activities necessary to the success of recruitment efforts of this kind. This is not to say that servicing from long range would not be successful. But let's be as sure as we can be in this important initiative.

PAC's 65 employees may not appear large relatively speaking. However, the loss of a job in Hawaii is one less job for our children. The Army also reorganized and a similar office was established in Alaska, taking jobs from Hawaii. The Alaska office closed and moved somewhere in Western CONUS. The Air Force also re-structured and jobs in Hawaii were lost. Shouldn't we be concerned about the loss of any job and its long term impact on Hawaii's citizens?

The loss of PAC's jobs may have future adverse effects for Hawaii in consideration of the probable long term objectives of the DOD in regard to human resources servicing. The DOD's continuing reduction of staffing levels of human resource offices in the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and the Navy over the last 10 years will likely result in centralizing human resources under the DOD. If so, the HRO's under the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps will likely be re-organized into DOD offices. When this happens, the loss of jobs in Hawaii today will significantly affect the probability that Hawaii will be a site for a DOD human resource office (HRO). The impact will be the loss of additional jobs in Hawaii.

Is this consistent with the idea that the Pacific is critically strategic now and in the future? If the DOD intends to maintain a large physical presence in Hawaii and the Pacific, wouldn't the physical presence of a centralized HRSC/HRO office be better than a presence 3000 miles away?

The PAC services the Navy civilian population in Japan, Okinawa, and Guam. The distance presents inherent difficulties. The resulting time differences will present even greater concern for the North and South West Centers. Pac has about 2-3 hours of direct telephone contact under normal working hours with the activities in Japan, Okinawa, and Guam. The West Coast activities will have essentially no direct telephone contact with these activities, unless they extend their working hours to 6:00 or 7:00 P.M.

The PAC is the most culturally diverse HRSC. This diversity reflects the cultural mix in Hawaii and is a significant factor in human resources service to Navy activities in Hawaii and the Western Pacific. This diversity will challenge the West Coast or other HRSC's that service Hawaii activities. Imagine the huge recruitment for the Carrier Group materializing. Imagine the West Coast staffs talking to the recruits from CONUS or Hawaii about working and living in Hawaii! Imagine the West Coast staffs talking to military family members about employment issues in Hawaii!

The special relationships the PAC staff has developed with Hawaii activities and their managers will be difficult to replace. Many PAC staff have worked with these managers for years and developed special working relationships. The number of PAC staff that may move to the West Coast Centers is likely to be Hawaii. The Waipahu training activities will be lost and, perhaps, even more significantly, at a time

The other significant cost is the positions or employees. PAC's closing will result in a net loss of about 25 positions. Is this worth the closing of PAC especially when the difference in the total costs are minimal? Employees who occupy the 40 positions that would transfer to the North and South West Centers will receive locality pay which is included in the calculation of their retirement annuities. PAC employees receive COLA which will be reduced beginning in about two years. The COLA is not included in the calculation of their retirement annuities. The cost difference is minimal when considering the locality pay rates are probably in the 15 to 18% range and the employees who retire under locality pay will receive higher annuities for, let's estimate, 20 to 30 years.

Are there effects on Hawaii HRO's? The movement of PAC's work to the North and South West HRSC's will change existing processes with the HRO's in Hawaii. This will result in changes and adjustments by the Hawaii HRO's, as well as the activities and managers. Perhaps, the adjustments may include further resource reductions.

In addition to simply taking PAC off the BRAC list, another alternative is to consolidate the PAC with the Hawaii and Western Pacific HRO's, forming one consolidated Human Resources office in Hawaii with satellite offices in Okinawa, Japan, and Guam. This alternative presents benefits to all concerned. The consolidation eliminates perhaps 10 positions. The consolidation keeps 40 positions in Hawaii, proposed for movement to the North and South West HRSC's. The consolidation maintains Hawaii as a site for a future DOD consolidated human resources office. The consolidation prepares the DON for the significant effort required to prepare for and support the carrier group. The consolidation maintains the on-site, close and vital working relationships with our DON activity customers in Hawaii and Western Pacific.

Representative Case

Request your assistance in trying to save our jobs here at Defense Finance and Accounting Service - Pacific [located on Ford Island], as you probably are aware we were on the original BRAC list of 13 May 2005. Although many people here in Hawaii were not aware, as we were not named on the original list, instead our numbers were hidden in with Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

We have been reading newspaper articles from across the country of how the local, state and congressional delegations have been lobbying hard try and keep their DFAS sites off the BRAC list [most notably Cleveland, Limestone and Rome]. Unfortunately no one has been very vocal in trying to save our jobs here at Ford Island. I realize that our numbers are small [approximately 200] as compared to Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, however Limestone and Rome are not much bigger than we are, but their lawmakers are doing everything within their power to keep those sites open.

Our customers depend on our excellent service. We pay vendor bills, do accounting and some system support for military activities in Hawaii, Alaska, Guam and Japan. We are the ONLY DFAS office that is 'PURPLE', work for all four services done here at DFAS-Pacific. How will all that change when the workload moves to somewhere 5-6 hours ahead of Hawaii?

Some here survived the last round of consolidations that took place over 10 years ago when DFAS was first opened. Have we realized a cost saving from those consolidations? DFAS is promising to offer every employee a job, with paid PCS [personal change of station] costs provided. How much will this cost the government? How much will it cost to renovate or expand existing buildings to accommodate more personnel?

Hope you will help to keep our site open. Thank you for your time.