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Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2005

ORIGINAL

Admiral Harold Gehman (ret.)
Commissioner
Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Admiral Gehman:

We have been following with interest the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's hearings on the Hill this week, and want to share our concerns about Commissioners' inquiries with respect to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar and Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), San Diego.

During the hearing with Navy and Marine Corps officials, commissioners made references to community interest in acquiring Miramar or MCRD for the purposes of providing more commercial air capacity in San Diego. Please be aware that the Mayor, state and federal delegations have been united in opposition to closure of either of these facilities, and have all gone on record opposing any studies of the facilities for alternative use.

Service officials spent months reviewing all military bases, the extensive data provided on them, and along with the cross-service teams, they considered alternative scenarios to the current military base infrastructure. Ultimately, that process validated the military value of both Miramar and MCRD and confirmed the value of preserving each to protect the tightly networked complex of Navy-Marine Corps training facilities in the San Diego region.

As a sea-based force, the Marines need ready access to the coast, and its onshore and offshore ranges. The services have concentrated infrastructure in the region because it is the most efficient training location -- for the military and American taxpayers. Eliminating any one component of the synergistic complex reduces the effectiveness and increases the cost of training for the services.

While many of us remain concerned about reducing base infrastructure nationwide at this time, we are confident in the process and in the Commission's commitment to careful and independent review of the Department's recommendations. We are encouraged that the 2005 BRAC process mandates military value as the primary consideration for base sustainment, and believe that any review of these bases under those terms will confirm their value to the U.S. military.

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We believe that careful analysis of the volumes of data provided to the services by those bases on the list as well as those that were not included will confirm the decision to sustain all major Navy-Marine Corps facilities in the San Diego region. As you continue your review, we urge that you not only assess the value of individual bases, but in the case of San Diego, the collective value of this irreplaceable regional complex. We welcome continued discussions on the San Diego military network, and stand ready to provide any additional information you would like in that regard.

Sincerely,

Randy "Duke" Cunningham

Barbara Boxer

Duncan Hunter

Bob Filner

Darrell Issa

Susan A. Davis

Dianne Feinstein