

DCN 6998

BRAC Commission**AUG 09 2005**

Chairman: The Honorable Anthony J. Principi

Commissioners: The Honorable James H. Bilbray; The Honorable Philip G. Coyle; Admiral Harold W. Gehman Jr. (USN, Ret.); The Honorable James V. Hansen; General James T. Hill (USA, Ret.); General Lloyd W. Newton (USAF, Ret.); The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner; Brigadier General Sue E. Turner (USAF, Ret.)

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners,

I would like to provide an input to the BRAC Commission relative to realignment of the Naval Base Ventura City sensor, electronics, and EW work to China Lake to aid in creating an Integrated Weapons and Armaments Center at China Lake. I'm sure that being swayed by those who are personally or emotionally against the move would be counter to the purpose of BRAC 2005.

During my career I spent 24 years in government service, 2 years active service in the Navy and 22 years at China Lake retiring in 1988. I also spent 20 years in industry, 6 1/2 before China Lake and 13 1/2 after retirement. During my industrial years I was employed by an aerospace firm that experienced a layoff of thousands of their personnel. There was not a process like BRAC to aid in the process but the company, the affected personnel and the associated community all survived.

My experience at China Lake includes founder and Head of the Aircraft Survivability and Weapons Lethality Division (during Viet Nam), managing the Electronic Combat Range (ECHO Range) through a get well program in the early 1980's, Electronic Warfare Department associate department head, and Head of the Electronic Warfare long range planning office. I was also heavily involved in Joint service activities, supported the Association of Old Crows and coordinated extensively with Point Mugu in weapons analysis and EW. I spearheaded the establishment of the Tri-Centers Committee on EW involving Pax River, Pt. Mugu and China Lake. I also helped establish and Chaired the DOT&E Tri-Service Coordination Group involving all three Services. My experience tells me that China Lake is up to the task and a number of key Point Mugu associated personnel will respond positively in support. The movement of Corona personnel to China Lake in the 1970's put together the Corona Fuze development personnel with China Lake's warhead development organization resulting in an unified, effective ordnance development capability. Not only did China Lake gain some excellent personnel, one became the Center's Technical Director.

Additionally, the city of Ridgecrest and the supporting community infrastructure, as presented to your staff, are prepared to accept the population growth associated with the realignment. I have personally examined the community's assertion that it is prepared to support the growth and I agree with their conclusions.

It stands to reason that a transition plan will be developed that ensures continued operational response of US EW capability thereby negating any potential risk to our war fighting capability and to US Service personnel lives. The workforce can be augmented by industry to effectively fill those positions where existing intellectual capital is lost then acquisition and training of government personnel can provide for the future.

I think you can rest easy knowing that the Navy / Defense Department recommendations correctly support BRAC criteria and Secretary of Defense transformation goals. Those who move to China Lake/Ridgecrest will find a capable and effective management staff and workforce as well as a great and caring community. Those who choose not to move will survive.

Hugh Drake

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