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Prepared Opening Remarks To  
The 2005 Defense Base Closure and  
Realignment Commission

United States Senator John Warner

August 4, 2005

Regional Hearing on  
Master Jet Base, Naval Air Station Oceana , Virginia

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, only you know why we are here today. I, for one, do not. After exhaustive research and an analysis of alternatives, the United States Navy recommended that Naval Air Station Oceana be retained as their East Coast Master Jet Base. In preparing his recommendations that were submitted to the Commission on May 13, 2005, the Secretary of Defense concurred with that decision. After an exhaustive review of the certified data used by the Navy per the requirement of section 2903(c)(5)(A), I cannot find anything that would call into question that decision.

Any suggestion of “a clean sheet,” as suggested by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in a letter to the BRAC Commission on July 14, 2005, to solve Oceana’s problems should also apply to the overwhelming majority of other military bases in this country which face a range of encroachment issues. As we all heard from Navy representatives during the site visit to Oceana earlier this week, no viable options exist to replace Oceana. And with continued community support, none will be needed.

I received a letter from the Department of the Navy just yesterday, which I will submit for the record, which states:

*“The Department’s position has been, and remains, that NAS Oceana is the most suitable option as a Navy East Coast Master Jet Base in support of East Coast Fleet carrier*

*operations and we have a plan to ensure its viability into the future, assuming community support.”*

General Hill, in a forthright manner, stated at a Commission hearing on July 19, 2005, and later during the site visit to Oceana, that Admiral Clark “wanted to close Oceana.” I have looked and I cannot find any public record where Admiral Clark made such a statement, and therefore have no way to review the certified data that would support such a statement. Absent the supporting data, how do we explain to the people of Virginia why we are here today?

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I understand the desire of the Commission to want to “help the Navy”. I also believe that you want the best military advice that is available. Therefore, based on the Commission’s practice that the senior Senator for a State set the agenda, I have asked the new Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mullen, to testify today regarding the Department’s decision to retain Naval Air Station Oceana as the Navy’s East Coast Master Jet Base. He is the new E.F. Hutton – I hope you will listen.

A the conclusion of the CNO’s testimony, Governor Warner, Senator Allen and I would like to take a few moments to share our thoughts with the Commissioners before we close the hearing for a classified session.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
1000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

3 August 2005

The Honorable John W. Warner  
Unites States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to the July 29, 2005, inquiry from Mr. Cord Sterling of your staff concerning Naval Air Station Oceana, VA. We have coordinated these responses with OPNAV and Commander, Fleet Forces Command. Your questions and our responses follow:

*1. It has been stated that the JSF will be a louder aircraft than the F/A-18 E/F. Is there certified data on the noise levels of the JSF vs. the F/A-18 E/F?*

Certified data, in the context of data collected for BRAC analysis, means that the information is accurate and complete, to the knowledge and belief of the person providing it. This particular question was not asked during the BRAC data calls and thus there is no "certified data" on it.

The only information available on the JSF comes from a few tests on the Lockheed F-35A engine. More comprehensive data, akin to what we use for noise projections associated with planning, will not be available until initial versions of the JSF are delivered and operating profiles - especially throttle settings at various points in a pattern - are developed. Based upon the initial data from Lockheed, it appears that the JSF will be noisier than an F/A-18 C/D. If compared with an F/A-18 E/F, the JSF will be noisier on departure and quieter upon approach.

It is worth noting that these are single event noise level comparisons of aircraft in the same flight regime. However, the JSF may not fly the same flight profiles as the F/A-18E/F. Differing aircraft performance characteristics (e.g., climb capability) may warrant different flight procedures at the field that may change single event noise levels experienced by the community. Also, the number of flight operations for the JSF at the fleet homebase is expected to be significantly less than the current master jet bases, because the JSF Integrated Training Center (ITC) is recommended to be located at a separate facility. The ITC will take on much of the current role of Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS) present at master jet bases such as NAS Oceana. As a result, while single event noise levels may be higher for JSF, the frequency of events is expected to be lower.

*2. The AICUZ map which was used in the BRAC process is based on 1999 projected data. The AICUZ map that the Navy used in the Environmental Impact Study for the*

*basing of the F/A-18 E/F squadrons and the location of the Outlying Field is different, is based on modeled information, and shows much smaller areas included in the 65db and 75 db zones. I understand the value of using the larger zones from the 1999 projections for planning purposes in working with the communities regarding development issues, however, are the 2000 modeled zones a more accurate reflection of current noise levels?*

To respond to this question requires an explanation of how noise contours are developed and how they are used because they are often misunderstood. Neither the 1999 contours nor the 2000 baseline contours represent current noise levels that people actually hear at any given time. Both the original projected 1999 contour from the F/A-18 C/D EIS and the 2000 baseline contour from the F/A-18 E/F East Coast Basing EIS are based on modeled information with respect to both operations and noise. These contours, which reflect a modeled day-night average noise level over the course of a year, are used for a number of purposes, including assisting local communities in land use planning. The contours are developed based upon computer models that analyze, among other things, the type of aircraft being flown, how those aircraft operate, what time of day or night those operations occur, the flight tracks these aircraft use, and the noise emitted by those aircraft during the operations.

The 2000 baseline contour is the most accurate model developed to date with respect to the noise environment after all of the F/A-18 C/D aircraft had relocated to NAS Oceana in 1999. The baseline 2000 contours reflect how the F/A-18 C/D aircraft were actually being flown (including throttle settings) at NAS Oceana, which differed in certain respects from some of the assumptions used in modeling the projected 1999 contours.

The Navy has not developed a contour that models the current, i.e., August 2005, noise environment. The 1999 map has just been adopted in a tri-city Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) and is simply a planning tool. Using the 1999 contours provides city planners with a valid planning tool and avoids the uncertainty associated with accommodating short-term changes. The noise contours for every NAS Oceana alternative in the Environmental Impact Statements for homebasing the F/A-18C/D and the F/A-18 E/F fit within the 1999 contours.

*3. Do you believe that the Navy will succeed in building an outlying field for use by the squadrons at NAS Oceana?*

Yes. The current litigation only concerns the District Court's determination that the Navy's environmental analysis was inadequate in some respects. The Navy is confident that it will ultimately succeed in its proposal to build an additional outlying field for use by the F/A-18 E/F squadrons that will be stationed at NAS Oceana. The District Court's injunction does not affect our ability to build an OLF once we have satisfied either the 4th Circuit or the District Court that all environmental planning requirements have been met. Because of the importance of creating this capability as soon as possible, the Department of the Navy is pursuing a dual track strategy. The first track involves appealing the District Court decision that the Navy failed to

comply with the National Environmental Policy Act in the process of selecting an OLF in Washington County, and appealing the injunction issued by the District Court that has halted further actions to build an OLF in Washington County. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments on our appeal on July 20th. The second track involves initiating a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that will address the areas where the district court found our initial analysis to be lacking. The Notice of Intent for this SEIS was published on June 24th.

*4. Do you agree with the certified data that there are no operational restrictions or degradation of operations at NAS Oceana?*

Yes. Oceana meets current operational training requirements with the level of encroachment that exists today in the surrounding community. Changes to flight tracks and procedures have been implemented periodically, but they have not impacted the ability to meet requirements. We note, however, with the onset of the Fleet Response Plan Oceana and Fentress lack the physical capacity to meet East Coast FCLP requirements for surging multiple CSG's. The Navy, as a good neighbor, voluntarily modified several operational flight procedures at Fentress and Oceana to mitigate the noise without sacrificing safety of flight, safety to the community or jeopardizing the mission of training our naval aviators to be ready for carrier operations. The new OLF will allow us to optimize our FCLP training by alleviating both the ambient lights and the voluntary altitude deviations at Fentress while giving us the operational surge capability required to meet national security requirements.

*5. Admiral Willard and the Deputy Secretary of Defense have stated that encroachment at Oceana is manageable. Do you agree? Please articulate what you to believe is meant by "manageable". Will the Navy be able to continue to operate NAS Oceana as its East Coast Master Jet Base if the state and local communities take effective action to prevent and reverse encroachment?*

Encroachment at Oceana is "manageable" at present. "Manageable" means that we have been able to identify and implement measures that, despite current levels of encroachment, allow us to train pilots at Oceana and OLF Fentress. Our experience is that encroachment is a dynamic challenge, even when encroachment is managed. Without effective management – by the Navy and our community neighbors – even small changes can impact training.

Encroachment at Oceana is manifested in several ways. Most significant, light from development in the vicinity of OLF Fentress provides artificial visual cues to pilots training to land on a carrier at sea that degrades the value of the training provided and could make pilots less ready to deal with the tremendous challenges of landing on a moving carrier on a moonless night. Similarly, public complaints about noise levels and frequent overflights during FCLPs has led to changes in the landing patterns, both in shape and altitude, in an effort to mitigate the noise. The value of repetitive training on a critical skill like carrier landings is reduced when the training includes a different pattern flown at a higher altitude (as is the case with

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OLF Fentress) than is actually used on carriers at sea. The DON's decision to build a new OLF to train the F/A-18 E/F squadrons is an example of measures intended to provide more realistic training and thus manage encroachment impacts.

As stated above, management of encroachment requires cooperative effort on the part of both Navy and local communities. Navy is committed to working with the cities of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake and Norfolk as a team to maximize all ongoing discussions.

*6. According to Navy charts, the F-14 is louder than the F-18 and the F-14s will be phased out over the next few years. Can you verify this?*

While we are not sure which charts your question refers to, the F-18C/D/E/F is generally louder than the F-14 in virtually all flight regimes. Yes, it is true that F-14s will be phased out over the next few years.

*7. What is the estimated cost of replacing the facilities at Oceana?*

We have recently run several additional scenarios at the Commission's request, to include building a new MJB, that are being analyzed using the same procedures used for other estimates considered under BRAC. This analysis is not yet complete. As a point of comparison, using existing data, the plant replacement value of Oceana is \$1.4B.

*8. Is it possible to identify a new location and build a new Master Jet Base by 2011?*

We do not believe so. The challenges associated with locating suitable land that meets operational geographic requirements are significant. A wholesale move within the BRAC timeline of all assets located at NAS Oceana to a location that would require building all new infrastructure will likely adversely impact required Fleet naval aviation readiness levels. An undertaking of such magnitude is quite complicated. We do not believe this process could be completed by 2011. Even if the BRAC Commission were to select a specific site, completing the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on how to design and construct the new air station could take over three years. No construction could take place until the EIS was completed and all required permits and approvals are obtained, which could take another year or more. For these reasons we do not believe it reasonable to assume that we will be able to complete the planning, permitting, construction, and movement within the period provided for implementation of BRAC 2005 recommendations.

*9. If a decision is made in the future to build a new Master Jet Base, is there any requirement or value in moving Oceana squadrons to another location in the interim? Would such a recommendation be cost effective? Would such a recommendation improve or diminish military value?*

There is no value in moving aircraft out of Oceana as an interim step. If the Navy was to construct a new Master Jet Base, it should be coordinated in such a way that squadrons move only once and that the new base is designed from the ground up to support the latest airframes in the TACAIR inventory. Relocating the FA-18 aircraft from NAS Oceana would require airframe specific construction at the receiving location. Some of that construction would be for the 85 FA-18C Hornets which will begin transitioning to the JSF in 2011. To support the JSF, which will have no airframe commonality with the FA-18, construction of JSF support facilities needs to begin in 2009 at a JSF receiving site to be separately selected outside BRAC. Thus, a scenario that suggests an "interim" base for the F/A-18Cs would result in construction and relocation expenses that will only support the fleet for a relatively short period of time.

*10. Do you believe that the closure or realignment of NAS Oceana in the 2005 round of BRAC would be in the best interest of the American taxpayer or the men and women in uniform?*

The Department's position has been, and remains, that NAS Oceana is the most suitable option as a Navy East Coast Master Jet base in support of East Coast Fleet carrier operations and we have a plan to ensure its viability into the future, assuming community support.

*11. Does the Navy have sufficient funds to relocate Oceana squadrons and build a new master jet base?*

There are no funds presently budgeted to accomplish this task within the BRAC timeframe. The effort, as previously discussed in response to question # 7, would result in a large cost with very limited savings, therefore requiring DON to sacrifice recapitalizing the Navy during the BRAC window to achieve this goal.

I trust this information satisfactorily addresses your immediate concerns. If we can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



*for* Anne Rathmell Davis  
Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy  
For Base Realignment and Closure

Enclosures:  
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## **F-35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER COMMUNITY NOISE**

July 2005

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### **F-35 JSF Noise Overview**

- **JSF noise levels are comparable to legacy aircraft**
- **No significant difference in ground noise footprint**
- **JSF performance can potentially mitigate community noise footprint to levels comparable to or less than legacy aircraft by the following:**
  - Using Mil Power JSF vs. Afterburner Legacy take-offs and/or
  - Using steeper climb out at typical training weights
    - JSF is moderately louder directly under the flight path but levels fall off rapidly on the sidelines
    - JSF is developing noise mitigation take-off profiles

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## F-35 JSF Community Noise

- **JSF Community noise is divided into 2 parts**
  - Far-field ground run-up noise
  - Far-field flyover noise
- **JSF collected significant amounts of X-35 noise data during the Concept Demonstration Phase (CDP) of the program**
- **Analysis of X-35 Concept Demonstrator Aircraft (CDA) acoustic data showed strong non-linearity and directivity**
  - Non-linear effect results in lower noise levels than expected at distances greater than 1k ft, and directivity affects the focus of the noise under the aircraft flightpath when compared to sideline noise
  - Non-linear propagation has also been exhibited by F/A-22 (F119 engine) and F/A-18E/F (GE-414 engine) noise data

PC084242

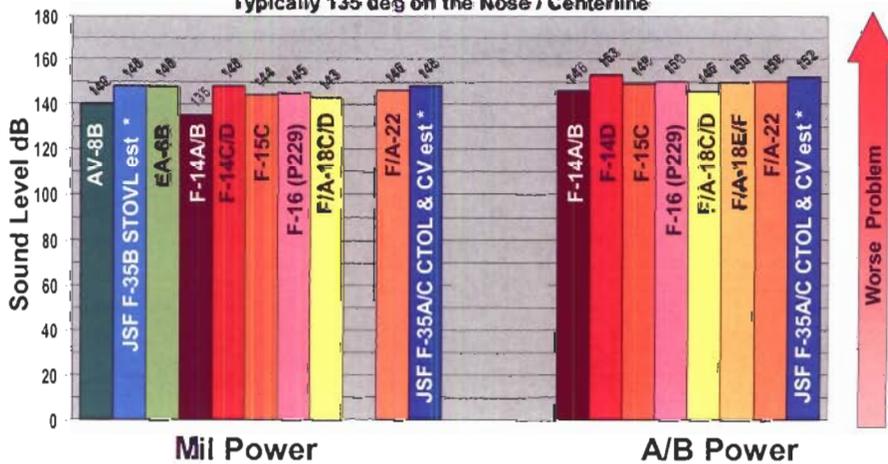
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## Legacy & JSF Aircraft Ground Run-up Noise

Aircraft Noise – 50 ft Radius at worst case angle  
Typically 135 deg off the Nose / Centerline



\* SDD F-35 Estimates based on X-35 Concept Demonstrator Aircraft (CDA) measurements

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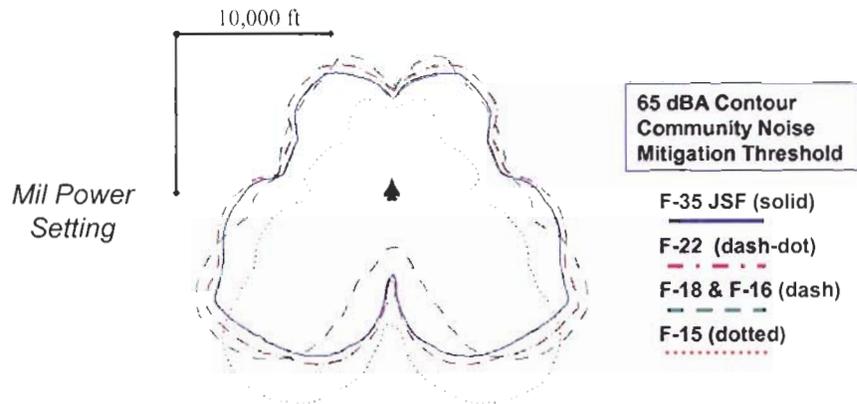
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## Ground Run-Up Noise Comparisons

### 65 dBA MITIGATION THRESHOLD CONTOURS



HUD recommends that outdoor day-night sound levels not exceed 65 dBA in residential areas. Federal funding for housing projects in areas which exceed an annual yearly day/night average of 65 dBA is normally withheld unless there is special approval, based on particular circumstances and specific criteria.

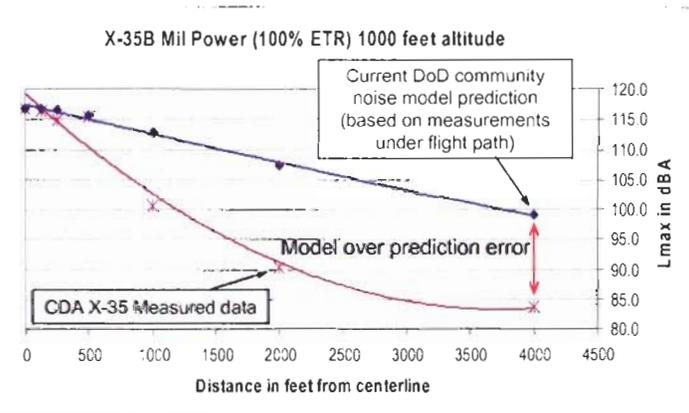
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## Predicted vs. Observed Flyover Noise Data Mil Power



F-22 and X-32 both exhibited comparable non-linear propagation and directivity errors in their flyover over noise data

**JSF non-linear noise effects resulted in measured noise being less than the linear noise model predictions**

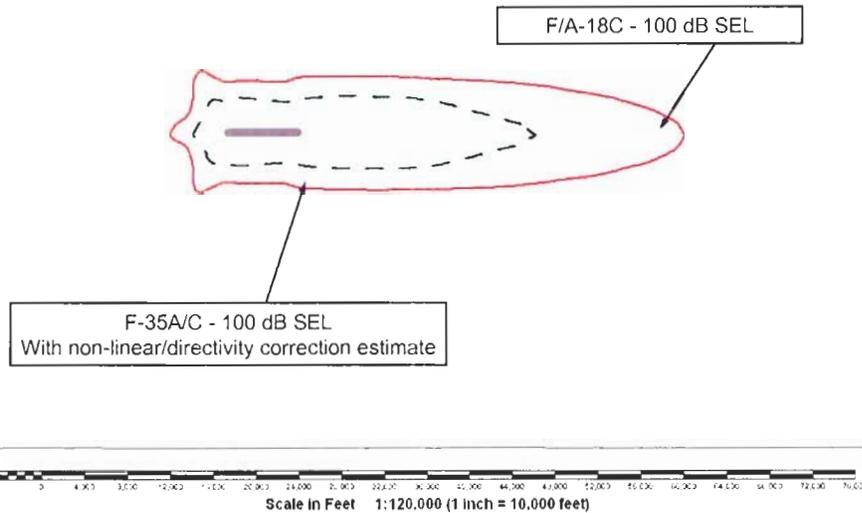
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## F-35A/C vs F/A-18C Takeoff Noise Both in Mil Power – Standard departures



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## F-35 JSF Noise Summary

- JSF has been proactive in assessing community noise impacts and developing mitigation strategies
- F-35 can have a noise footprint comparable to or less than high performance legacy aircraft depending on the flight profile

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**WORKING TO AFFORDABLY MEET THE  
REQUIREMENTS OF THE WARFIGHTER**



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the next generation strike fighter

Prepared Testimony To

**The 2005 Defense Base Closure and  
Realignment Commission**

**United States Senator John Warner**

August 4, 2005

Regional Hearing on  
Master Jet Base, Naval Air Station Oceana , Virginia

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I thank you for the opportunity to provide facts for your consideration concerning the future of Naval Air Station Oceana.

Oceana is the United States Navy's Master Jet Base on the East Coast, with the primary mission of training and deploying strike-fighter squadrons. While the value of the facilities--four runways, 25 hangar modules, and other assorted infrastructure--is estimated at \$1.7 billion, Oceana's value to the Navy's Atlantic Fleet is priceless.

In making its recommendations to the Secretary of Defense for the 2005 BRAC process, the Navy assessed all factors concerning Oceana, including operational infrastructure and training, airfield characteristics, the environment and--most importantly—**encroachment**. The Navy concluded that Oceana ranks among the top 5 in military value—the highest priority criteria under the BRAC law—of all military air installations.

The military value analysis conducted by the Navy to assess encroachment issues examined incompatible land use, operational constraints, and zoning regulations. After carefully weighing these issues, the military value of Oceana—as determined by the Navy--was 65.52; higher than Beaufort (59.66), higher than Moody (28.20), higher than Whiting

(59.66), higher than Patuxent River (60.66), and higher than Naval Air Station Lemoore (61.77), the Navy's Master Jet Base on the West Coast. The military value of Oceana nearly matched that of MCAS Miramar (66.61) a West Coast Master Jet Base with encroachment concerns identified by the Department of Defense, but not singled out by the Commission for further review.

According to the Navy, NAS Oceana provides “exceptional support” to fleet carrier air wings and carrier strike groups, joint forces, and homeland defense. For 60 years, the Navy has utilized Oceana to turn naval aviators into the best strike fighter pilots in the world. Oceana shares 94,000 square miles of unencumbered and instrumented airspace with Langley Air Force Base to support joint training. The flying range ceiling reaches “all the way to the moon,” with 4,560 square miles of free airspace for its Tactical Air Combat Training System, a complex network of sea-based sensors that would have to be replicated elsewhere if the Oceana-based squadrons are moved. Oceana also is close to the Dare County bombing range for inert air to ground bombing practice. And with the completion of the new Outlying Field (OLF) in North Carolina, which I am convinced will happen, training will get

even better by allowing pilots to more closely replicate the conditions of landing on an aircraft carrier.

The value of NAS Oceana's proximity to Norfolk Naval Station cannot be underestimated. This short distance allows quick surface transport of personnel and material necessary to load aboard the aircraft carriers to which the airwings are assigned, supporting the Navy's ability to surge forces forward quickly under its Fleet Response Plan. The aircraft are then launched from nearby NAS Oceana and can recover aboard the aircraft carrier as soon as it clears the Chesapeake Bay. There is no other area in the Country that offers the synergies between the fleet and the air-wings, as we have at Oceana.

Turning to the BRAC law, Section 2903(d)(2)(B) provides that the Commission may make changes to the Secretary's recommendations "*if the Commission determines that the Secretary deviated substantially*" from the criteria. In the case of Oceana there is no substantial deviation that has taken place. In fact, Oceana is a prime example of the Secretary using the most important BRAC criteria—military value—to support his recommendation submitted to the Commission on May 13, 2005.

Any decision to relocate Oceana's squadrons to a location with less military value, or to direct the Secretary of Defense to find an unidentified location with no measurable military value, would in and of itself--be a substantial deviation of the BRAC criteria. The Department of Defense spent years studying this base and all options before deciding to retain Oceana. The certified data, combined with sound military judgment, clearly proves that Oceana is critical to naval operations and that there are no viable alternatives. According to the Department's BRAC report:

*"COBRA analysis of the Naval Air Station Oceana scenarios indicated a long return on investment, with high one-time costs for possible receiving site alternatives, including one Air Force base. Evaluation of the receiving sites all identified operational issues that could impact their viability as an East Coast master jet base. Therefore, without another viable location for a Navy master jet base on the East Coast, the closure of Naval Air Station Oceana was not possible and dropped from consideration."*

This Commission has had one month to review the alternatives that the Navy has already studied and rejected. During this time, I have not been

made aware of any incorrect data used by the Navy in their military value analysis for Oceana. I have not been made aware of any incorrect COBRA cost data for scenarios involving Oceana. Maintaining Oceana does not result in a detrimental economic impact. There is no question regarding the ability of the local infrastructure to support operations at Oceana. I have not been informed of a single piece of data that could be used by the Commission to determine, that in choosing to retain Oceana, *“the Secretary deviated substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria”* as required by Section 2903(d)(2)(B) of the BRAC statute.

On the other hand, a decision by the Commission to close Oceana as a Master Jet Base would result in a substantial deviation from the BRAC selection criteria. Such a decision would mean that an air station which received one of the highest rankings in terms of military value would be closed or realigned. The cost to replace the facilities would be significant with no payback--another substantial deviation.

Encroachment and the impact on training have been stated as the reason for the Commission’s decision to consider the closure of Oceana. However, according to the Department’s certified data, which has been supported by testimony and site visits, **there are no operational restrictions**

**or degradations which impair the readiness of the pilots using Oceana.**

According to Rear Admiral Bullard (the officer responsible for fleet readiness training), who briefed the Commission, pilots operating out of Oceana are as qualified as any others in the United States, and have been for the last 27 years since issues of encroachment were first addressed.

I remind the Commission that neighborhoods are only one form of encroachment is not an issue unique to Oceana. The Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego is surrounded by a major metropolitan area which requires recruits to spend approximately 1/3 of their training days at another installation. Fort Bragg in North Carolina has severe restrictions on training areas resulting from the preservation of the red cockaded woodpecker. The same is true at Camp Pendleton which is required to protect the fairy shrimp, and the Goldwater range which protects the pronged antelope.

Severe airspace encroachment was a major reason for the 1995 BRAC Commission's decision to close Cecil Field in Florida and move the jets to the unfettered airspace of Oceana. How can this Commission be seriously considering reversing a decision of the last BRAC round and returning these planes to Cecil Field? NAS Oceana has not had to restrict flying operations to curtail the take-off of combat loaded aircraft to one end of the runway like

other air bases with more severe encroachment problems. Given that the Commission has taken an interest in the issue of encroachment, I have to question why the Commission did not consider other air bases for further review, given their more severe encroachment problems.

Most military installations in the United States suffer from encroachment of one form or another. That is an unfortunate fact of life. Some bases have addressed the problem, while others are mired in lawsuits. The local communities supporting NAS Oceana have been proactively and aggressively cooperating with the Navy for years to address issues related to the encroachment of local development. A Joint Use Land Study was recently completed for NAS Oceana by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in cooperation with numerous local communities. As a result, local communities enthusiastically adopted a long-term plan to manage the growth of surrounding development while allowing certain types of construction and maintaining safe decibel levels for residential areas. As both the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and the Deputy Secretary of Defense have stated— the encroachment at Oceana is manageable.

The Department of Defense has suggested that if the Navy had a “clean sheet” it would build a new master jet base in a new location on the East Coast for the jets of the future. I have been working with the military for over 60 years and I can tell you that if the Department had a “clean sheet” for every base currently facing encroachment problems our military base structure throughout the country would look very different from what it is today. But that is not the reality with which we are confronted. We simply do not have the room, resources, or luxury in this country to start from scratch. We have vital acquisition and readiness requirements—requirements critical to protect our national security interests--that are competing for precious taxpayer dollars. Given the facts before us, how could we explain to the American taxpayer a decision to build a new master jet base at a cost that is undeterminable, rather than retain Oceana and its \$1.7 billion worth of infrastructure.

Before we decide to spend the billion plus dollars that a new base would cost, we must ask the critical questions.

- 1) Has encroachment resulted in operational restrictions which have degraded the training of our pilots? and

2) Is there a location that would better serve the military at a reasonable cost?

The answer to both of these questions as it applies to Oceana—according to the Department's own data--is an unequivocal NO.

The Secretary of Defense decided that Oceana's combination of close proximity to the fleet, access to superb training ranges, and an encroachment problem that is manageable, was the right answer for an east coast master jet base. Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I urge you to adhere to the BRAC criteria and to support the Secretary's decision.