

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



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CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, MEMBER OF CONGRESS
ROSA DELAURO, MEMBER OF CONGRESS
JOHN B. LARSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS
ROB SIMMONS, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

UNITED STATES CONGRESS



July 21, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi
BRAC Commission
Polk Building, Suites 600 and 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

Enclosed for your information and consideration are two letters relating to the OPNAV 2004 Force Structure Assessment (FSA) submitted to the Joint Staff in support of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The first letter is from the Connecticut delegation to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon Clark, dated June 23. The second is his reply, dated July 18.

At the heart of this correspondence is the question, why did the Chief of Naval Operations Submarine Warfare Division, OPNAV N77, not agree with assumptions and factors used to produce the OPNAV 2004 FSA, which shows a 21 percent reduction in the fast attack submarine force by 2025? ***In his July 18th response to the June 23rd letter, Admiral Clark conceded that N77 had "concerns" that were never resolved. These unresolved concerns are central to the force structure plan.***

The Department of Defense's failure to correctly assess our nation's required SSN force levels is a substantial deviation from the BRAC criteria that undermine the recommendation to close Naval Submarine Base New London. As you know, the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) this month reported that the proposed closure of SUBASE New London is based on the planned reductions in the fast attack submarine force.

The assumptions and factors used to produce the force structure plan are unrealistic and potentially dangerous. The plan, for example, assumes eight to nine submarines at Naval Base Guam, which currently can homeport only three. N77 rejected this assumption because a decision to homeport additional submarines would mean massive military construction outlays and a high level of risk from tropical storms.

The plan also assumes a turnaround rate that would deploy our fast attack submarines for unacceptably long periods. N77 rejected the turnaround rate an SSN force level of 37 to 41 would require because it is virtually impossible to execute.

Furthermore, Admiral Clark's response suggests the Combatant Commanders "presence requests" for SSNs are the same as those for "carriers, amphibious groups, and surface combatants." In actuality, the presence requests for fast attack submarines are intended to fulfill critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions -- not traditional flag displays. These ISR missions give us information to fight the war on terror and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; they also prepare the force for anti-submarine warfare overseas. Eliminating these missions is not a viable option for the Navy.

Finally, the modeled warfare scenarios unwisely rest on an assessment of the threat environment twenty years from now. The U.S. intelligence community has been consistently surprised by foreign threat developments; the Chinese navy, for instance, recently launched a new submarine class without warning. Our nation should not bet so much on a threat assessment so far into the future.

We believe a better indicator of our future SSN force level needs are to be found in real trends. Commander, Naval Submarine Forces, Vice Admiral Charles L. Munns recently testified to Congress that 54 fast attack submarines are "about what we need into the future."

VADM Munns also confirmed that "Combatant Commanders are collectively asking for more and more submarine mission days." He added that the Combatant Commanders, those directly responsible to the President for the performance of assigned missions and the preparedness of their commands, currently want 150 percent of the "critical" attack submarine mission days that the U.S. Navy can provide.

The BRAC process depends on an accurate and dependable force structure plan. The Department of Defense's failure to produce one that had the concurrence of N77 undermines its recommendation to close Naval Submarine Base New London. We urge you to consider this important point in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



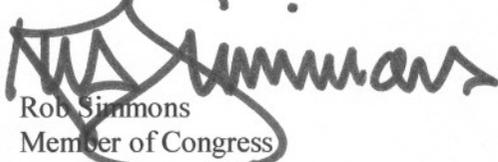
M. Jodi Rell
Governor



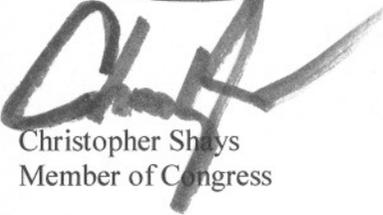
Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator



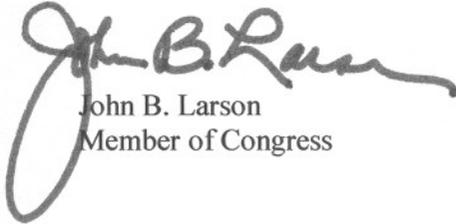
Joseph Lieberman
United States Senator



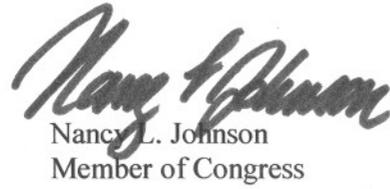
Rob Simmons
Member of Congress



Christopher Shays
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Nancy L. Johnson
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

18 JUL 2005

Dear Congressman Simmons,

The Navy's force structure plan, which was submitted to the Joint Staff in support of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, was based on the OPNAV 2004 Force Structure Assessment (FSA). The FSA was an evaluation of total Fleet ship requirements.

This study -- a comprehensive, analytical assessment of the entire ship force structure requirements of the Navy Fleet -- was the first force structure requirement study under this Administration's 1-4-2-1 Defense Strategy. Using campaign analysis and modeling, the OPNAV Warfighting and Analysis Branch (N70) supervised and coordinated with all warfighting OPNAV divisions. N77 participated, as did N78 (carrier) and N76 (surface combatant), as well as our acquisition community and the Fleet. The study yielded an objective, analytically derived Force Posture, balanced to fight and win our nation's wars, as well as provide necessary forward presence.

In the course of this study, N77 expressed concerns regarding operational availability assumptions and factors used in modeling the analysis, and made recommendations concerning these assumptions and factors. While some of N77's concerns were resolved in consonance with their recommended position, others were not. However, all concerns were addressed at senior levels in the chain of command as part of the deliberative process.

A key feature of this study is that the assessment of SSN force levels was based upon modeled warfare scenarios against today's threats and future potential threats. Some reports have referenced earlier force structure studies that were based upon peacetime presence requests from the Combatant Commanders. Studies based upon presence requests have yielded higher SSN force levels, and this is not unique to submarines: current Combatant Commander presence requests for carriers, amphibious groups, and surface combatants would require significantly higher force levels to meet such non-integrated and non-optimized requests. In the end, we must balance individual Combatant Commander requests for SSN presence, and presence of all Fleet units, with the best global warfighting and presence posture.

I appreciate your continued interest and support and am ready to answer any further questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vern Clark".

VERN CLARK
Admiral, U.S. Navy

The Honorable Rob Simmons
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2005

Admiral Vernon Clark
Chief of Naval Operations
1300 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1300

Dear Admiral Clark:

We are deeply concerned by the Department of the Navy's new estimate of the force level needs of the U.S. submarine fleet.

The Submarine Warfare Division, N77, coordinates overall policy for submarine force planning and programming. We have a number of questions concerning the Navy's submarine force policy and the role N77 played in formulating that policy. Specifically,

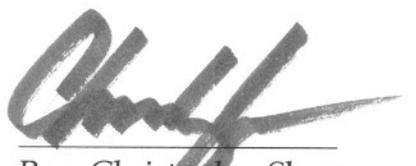
1. What year's Force Structure Plan was used in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round?
2. What was N77's role in the development of the Force Structure Plan used in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Process?
3. Specifically, what input did you request from N77 during the development of the Force Structure Plan?
4. What feedback did N77 deliver to you?
5. Was N77 consulted throughout the process?
6. Was the final plan vetted with N77?
7. Did N77 offer any concerns or recommendations, and if so, what were they?

The answers to these questions are of critical importance to our congressional and constitutional responsibilities. We look forward to your timely response.

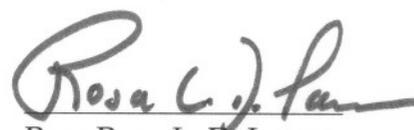
Sincerely,



Rep. Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

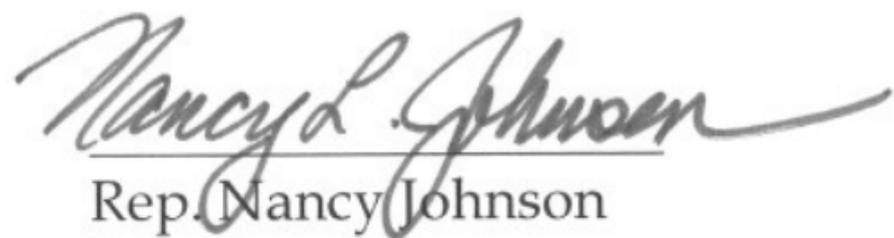


Rep. Christopher Shays
Member of Congress
Fourth District, Connecticut



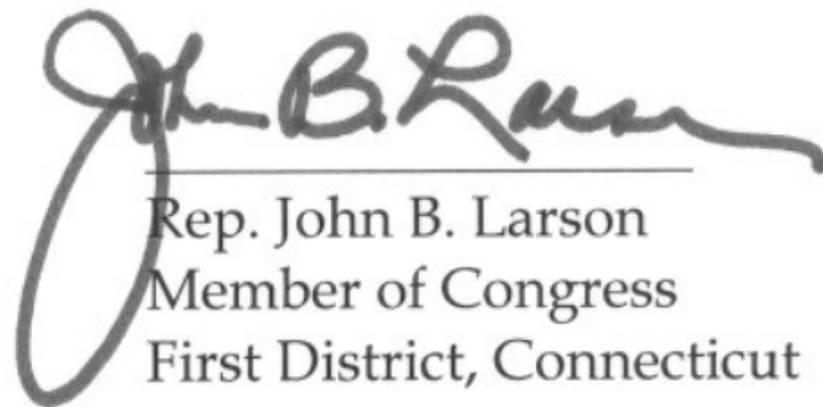
Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress
Third District, Connecticut

Executive Correspondence
DCN 5776



Nancy L. Johnson

Rep. Nancy Johnson
Member of Congress
Fifth District, Connecticut



John B. Larson

Rep. John B. Larson
Member of Congress
First District, Connecticut