

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

BRAC Commission

August 15, 2005

AUG 15 2005

Received

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We would like to supplement the testimony we provided at the hearing before you on August 10, 2005, concerning the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine. In particular, we want to bring to your attention information about a significant homeland security threat and the role Brunswick plays in countering this clear and present threat. This information was developed in recent testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, of which Senator Collins is chair.

In testimony before that Committee, senior government officials and homeland security experts have highlighted the threat posed to our nation's seaports from a so-called "Trojan horse" - an ocean-going cargo container carrying a weapon of mass destruction.

In testimony on May 26, 2005, before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (a copy of which is attached), Robert C. Bonner, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, highlighted the significance of this threat:

"The fact is that, today, the greatest threat we face to global maritime security is the potential for terrorists to use the international maritime system to smuggle terrorist weapons . . . into a targeted country.

"If even a single container were to be exploited by terrorists, the disruption to trade and national economies would be enormous. In May 2002, the Brookings Institution estimated that costs associated with United States port closures from a detonated terrorist weapon could amount to \$1 trillion from the resulting economic slump and effects upon our ability to trade.

"Clearly, the risk to international maritime cargo demands a robust security strategy that can identify, prevent and deter threats, at the earliest point in the international supply

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General James Hill
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Hill:

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The Honorable James Bilbray
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Bilbray:

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General Sue Ellen Turner
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Turner:

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The Honorable Philip Coyle
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Coyle:

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The Honorable Samuel Skinner
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Skinner:

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"Clearly, the risk to international maritime cargo demands a robust security strategy that can identify, prevent and deter threats, at the earliest point in the international supply chain, before arrival at the seaports of the targeted country.

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Admiral Harold Gehman
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Admiral Gehman:

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General Lloyd Newton
Member, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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"Clearly, the risk to international maritime cargo demands a robust security strategy that can identify, prevent and deter threats, at the earliest point in the international supply

chain, before arrival at the seaports of the targeted country. We must have a cohesive national cargo security strategy that better protects us against the threat posed by global terrorism without choking off the flow of legitimate trade that is so important to our economic security, to our economy, and, to the global financial system.”

At the March 9, 2005, hearing before the full Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff emphasized this same threat, stating, “The worst thing would be this: to have a program for reliable travel or reliable cargo that was insufficiently robust so that people could sneak in and use it as a Trojan horse. That would be the worst of all worlds.”

In additional testimony before the Committee on Governmental Affairs on March 20, 2003, titled, “Cargo Containers: The Next Terrorist Target?” former Coast Guard Commander Stephen Flynn made similar statements about the existence of this threat, and its potentially devastating consequences. He stated, “A modest investment by a terrorist could yield billions of dollars in losses to the U.S. economy by shutting down—even temporarily—the system that moves ‘just in time’ shipments of parts and goods.” A copy of this hearing transcript also is attached.

This real and high-consequence threat requires a strong and well-thought-out national response. Part of that response must include the capability to survey, interdict, and, if necessary, destroy a vessel carrying such a weapon of mass destruction before it reaches our shores.

Brunswick Naval Air Station’s location and its assets play a vital role in our nation’s strategic response to this threat. The presence of P-3 Orion aircraft, on alert at the base and on patrol over the North Atlantic, is a highly visible deterrent to terrorist activity at sea. Strategically placed near the north Atlantic shipping lanes, Brunswick also enables efficient maintenance of maritime domain awareness, threat detection, interdiction, and if necessary, elimination of the threat with onboard Maverick missiles or other weapons.

The P-3’s mission includes surveillance at sea or over land. Its long range and long loiter time have proved invaluable assets, as it can view the battlespace and instantaneously provide that information to U.S. Northern Command, the Navy, or ground troops. The P-3 has an avionics system that coordinates navigation information and accepts sensor data inputs for tactical display and storage. Additionally, this aircraft can carry a mixed payload of weapons internally and on wing pylons.

Brunswick is strategically located adjacent to the great circle routes for ships crossing the North Atlantic, making it critical for surveillance of ships coming from Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. Indeed, its proximity to major population centers, combined with its ability to support every aircraft in the DoD

inventory, makes Brunswick essential across the full range of homeland defense operations and contingencies.

Maritime patrol assets from Brunswick will continue to be needed to locate and monitor ships in the North Atlantic, including those potentially carrying weapons of mass destruction, cruise missiles, or other threats to our shores. Maritime Domain Awareness is a key component of homeland defense. Properly based Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft are essential to this increasingly important mission.

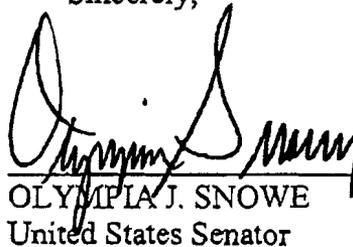
Response time and endurance on-station are critical in maritime patrol operations, and the location of a maritime patrol aircraft base is critical to those capabilities. The removal of full-time, operationally ready maritime patrol assets from the northeast would diminish our ability to counter the Trojan Horse threat and reduce Maritime Domain Awareness, leaving our nation vulnerable. It is a move that would increase the risk of failure in the defense of our homeland, a mission in which even a single failure could be catastrophic.

We appreciate the opportunity to share this hearing testimony with you. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

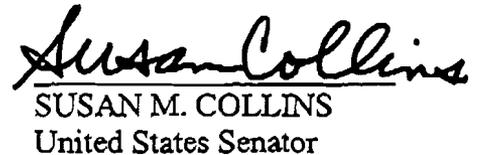
Sincerely,



JOHN E. BALDACCI
Governor of Maine



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator



SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



THOMAS H. ALLEN
United States Representative



MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
United States Representative