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BRAC Commission

AUG 18 2005

Received

August 16, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi  
BRAC Commission Chairman  
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Principi:

I am writing this letter to express my serious concerns with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations that you are currently reviewing. It is recommended that the Crane Division of the Naval Surface Warfare Center ("Crane") have 672 jobs realigned to other activities.

As highlighted in the BRAC guidance, Military Value is an important criteria being used to determine where work should be performed. Many installations that are scheduled to receive work from realignments scored lower than Crane in Military Value. This concerns me, as it appears that the recommendations concerning Crane stray from the stated evaluation criteria. Simply put, the cost per man hour is lower at Crane than almost any other similar installation.

Another important BRAC goal is to facilitate Joint Operations. Crane is already a joint operation, with Crane Army Ammunition Activity and the Naval Surface Warfare Center. Other factors considered in BRAC were environmental impact and economic impact to the local community. Crane has no environmental issues and absolutely NO encroachment issues. The area thrives on Crane and this facility can expand immensely at a relatively low cost. The impact of Crane to the immediate surrounding area is even more acute. For example, Crane accounts for more than 60% of direct wages in Loogootee which is in the same county as Crane. The loss of these jobs will have an immense impact on the entire southwestern quadrant of the state of Indiana which already experiences high unemployment.

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Page II  
Commissioner Principi

In summary, Crane truly exemplifies the BRAC criteria of Military Value – rapidly providing innovative, best-value solutions to our nation’s War fighters. This high level of service has attracted the most demanding customers from across the DoD, including USSOCOM, Navy Strategic Systems, as well as US Army and US Air Force Special Operations Commands. Crane’s commitment to superior service and value has kept these customers coming back, allowing for the creation of a joint, multi-functional set of capabilities that is unequaled in the Department of Defense (DoD).

Last and foremost, the commitment required to provide such support is in large part due to the sense of ownership Crane’s employees and surrounding communities feel about Crane. Many of the employees are veterans very much dedicated to fighting the war on terrorism.

I understand that during the hearings before your commission in St. Louis that the State of Indiana presented alternatives to the current DoD recommendations. These alternatives would provide greater military value, greater return on investment and less risk as well as reducing the negative economic impact of losing nearly 700 positions. I would hope that you will take these thoughts into consideration as you evaluate and make difficult decisions as to what is best for our country.

I wish to thank you in advance for your consideration, as well as for your service to this country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Barkley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Barkley  
President