



BRAC Commission

AUG 22 2005

Received

**\*\* SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE \*\***

**Fax Cover Sheet**

**Return this receipt to: Jennifer**

**FAX TO: Chairman Principi**  
**FAX NUMBER: (703) 699-2735**  
**PHONE NUMBER:**

**COMMENTS: Letter from Chairman Warner.**  
**A hard copy of the letter will be dropped off tomorrow for Chairman Principi and each of the Commissioners.**

**FROM:**  
*Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Rm SR-228, Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050*  
**PHONE: (202) 224 - 3871**

*This transmission consists  
of 4 pages, including  
this cover sheet.*

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

August 22, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This week you and your fellow commissioners will vote on recommendations regarding the infrastructure that will be used by the Department of Defense for the next ten years. I wanted to take one last opportunity to commend you for your efforts on behalf of the American taxpayers and our men and women in uniform.

As you engage in your final deliberations, I urge you to keep in mind a few key points regarding Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana. NAS Oceana ranked 5<sup>th</sup> of all military air installations in military value, the highest priority in the Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) process. NAS Oceana surpasses Cecil Commerce Center in its proximity to the aircraft carriers. NAS Oceana surpasses Cecil Commerce Center in its access to unencumbered and instrumented joint training airspace. NAS Oceana supports classified missions which Cecil Commerce Center cannot. According to certified data, Cecil Commerce Center will require more than \$1.6 billion to reopen. While some may disagree with this figure, the lowest estimate is several hundred million dollars.

The only area in which Cecil Commerce Center has been held up as better than Oceana is encroachment on the ground and the restrictions imposed on take offs and landings. The Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Virginia Beach have taken positive steps to stop encroachment and roll it back. The restrictions on take offs and landings are self imposed by the Navy and could be eliminated if the Navy determines it is necessary. The new outlying field, which will be built, will alleviate any problems that NAS Oceana has and do so at a fraction of the cost of reopening Cecil.

At my request, the Commissioners who attended the August 4, 2005 hearing were briefed by individuals from the Department of Defense in a closed session regarding other national security missions supported by NAS Oceana. During the August 20, 2005 hearing, a consultant for the State of Florida, retired Admiral Natter, stated that another air installation could be used instead of Oceana to support that mission. Enclosed you will find a letter I received on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August from the Special Operations Command which directly contradicts that statement.

Congress created the BRAC process to shed excess infrastructure and save money. A final vote to open a new master jet base at Cecil Commerce Center will increase excess infrastructure and cost the taxpayers—by the lowest estimates—several hundred million dollars.

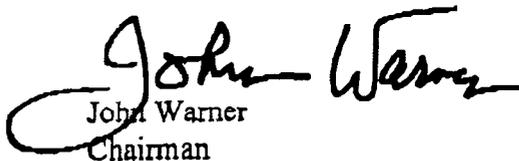
Section 2903 of the BRAC law states that before the Commission may make changes, the Commission must determine “that the Secretary deviated substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria referred to in subsection (c)(1) in making recommendations.” There is no evidence that there was any deviation, let alone substantial deviation. In fact, it would be impossible to present arguments of such a deviation in the Secretary’s recommendations since the Secretary did not make a recommendation regarding the closure or realignment of a Navy master jet base.

The senior leadership of the Department of Defense has made its position clear. Secretary England stated in his August 17, 2005 letter that “there is no viable alternative to Oceana Naval Air Station.” Admiral Mullen stated on August 4, 2005 in his testimony before this Commission “I need now—your Navy needs now—Naval Air Station Oceana.” These sentiments have been reinforced by Navy officers throughout the Atlantic Fleet including the Commander of Fleet Forces Command. The judgment of these individuals, not elected officials or paid consultants, should be given the greatest weight by the Commission since they are advocates for the men and women in uniform, not a particular state or municipality.

Thank you again for taking the time and making the effort to perform the difficult tasks associated with the base closure process.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,



John Warner  
Chairman

Enclosure

**UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER  
7701 TAMPA POINT BOULEVARD  
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33631-5323

The Honorable John W. Warner  
United States Senate  
225 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your question regarding the significance of Naval Air Station Oceana to the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), I would like to clearly state the Command's position on this matter. Given USSOCOM's current posture in the Norfolk, Virginia, area, in terms of both specialized facilities and uniquely demanding operational considerations, Naval Air Station Oceana is the only airfield that can meet our classified and highly sensitive mission requirements.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and the support you have given our special operations forces.

Sincerely,

  
Bryan D. Brown  
General, U.S. Army  
Commander

Copy Furnished:

The Honorable George F. Allen  
United States Senate  
204 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thelma Drake  
House of Representatives  
1208 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515