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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: Honorable Anthony J. Principi Chairman	FROM: Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula
FAX NUMBER: 703-699-2735	DATE: 8/23/2005
RE: Fort Monmouth base closure	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 4

☐ (CO)SPONSOR REQUEST ☐ POSTING REQUEST ☐ PRESS RELEASE ☐ FYI

☐ PER OUR DISCUSSION ☐ PER ASSEMBLYMAN CHIVUKULA'S REQUEST ☒ FOR YOUR REVIEW

ADDITIONAL NOTES/COMMENTS:
See attached.

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August 23, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark St., Suite 600
Arlington, Va. 22202

Dear Secretary Principi:

With the 2005 base realignment and closure (BRAC) closure process drawing to a close, you and your fellow Commissioners will soon begin final deliberations on the Department of Defense's BRAC recommendations. Before you begin this phase of evaluation and decision making, I want to stress upon you the utmost importance in terms of national security and local economic stability that the government maintain operations at Fort Monmouth in Eatontown, New Jersey.

The Pentagon wants to transfer Fort Monmouth's long-standing assignment to develop electronic and communications technologies to the Aberdeen, Md. Proving Ground. Other business functions at Fort Monmouth would be transferred to Columbus, Ohio. While I understand and appreciate the imperative of streamlining and better organizing our nation's military services, I find the Defense Department's proposal to shutter Fort Monmouth to be counterproductive, short-sighted, and unnecessary. It is wrong in terms of military preparedness, wrong for the fight against terror, and wrong for the State of New Jersey.

Fort Monmouth is strategically located near New York City and is home to an unparalleled community of scientists, engineers, and systems developers. It is vital part of our nation's increasingly sophisticated and high-tech oriented War on Terror. In fact, must of today's modern weaponry depends on software, intelligence systems and electronics developed and supported at the base.

Of more immediate consequence is the fact that our troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan depend on continued improvements in weaponry technology. The vital communications and technologies developed at the fort save lives.

While I realize that the BRAC members concern themselves largely with the national defense implications of any proposed base closure, there are other issues that of concern to me with respect to a potential shutdown of Fort Monmouth's mission.

The potential closure of Fort Monmouth would surely result in a loss of federal money into New Jersey. Our residents already get back only a fraction of the revenue they annually provide to the federal government. Now the disparity between what New Jersey sends to Washington and what it gets back will only be worsened. According to the Tax Foundation, in 2002 New Jersey received only 62 cents in federal expenditures for every federal tax dollar we sent to Washington -- ranking New Jersey 50th among the states.

A loss of Fort Monmouth also would hurt our state's telecommunications industry. New Jersey once was the worldwide center of telecommunications and electronics research. Our standing has weakened in the 20 years that have passed since the 1984 divestiture of AT&T, which once was headquartered in New Jersey. The loss of Fort Monmouth revenue would further exacerbate erosion of this important component of our state's economy.

A final consequence would be jobs. The base closures and realignments proposed for New Jersey are projected to result in a net loss of 3,760 positions, mostly because of the 5,272 slots that would be lost with Fort Monmouth's demise. Such job eliminations would present hardship to the thousands of families that depend on them and the state's high-tech community.

Please act prudently and foreseeingly when deciding Fort Monmouth's fate. The country can ill afford to close bases that develop technology to keep our dedicated and courageous troops safe from harm and allow them to maintain their superiority on the battlefield. We should not be closing bases as the rules of military engagement are changing so quickly and as we are still coming to grips with the new insidious threats that worldwide terrorism poses to our nation.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula
D-Franklin Township, N.J.

cc: Honorable Jon S. Corzine
Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Honorable Rush Holt
Honorable John Adler
Honorable Byron Baer
Honorable Jack Conners
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Honorable Wilfredo Caraballo
Honorable Robert Singer