



BRAC Commission

SEP 17 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

Received

ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Anthony:

Tommy

Thank you for taking on the awesome task of realigning our Nation's military infrastructure.

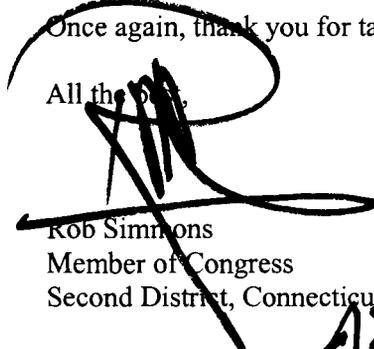
Thank you as well for your patience and courtesy in listening to Team Connecticut as we worked to explain why closing our naval submarine Center of Excellence in New London was not in the national interest.

We believe that the Commission's courageous vote to remove the base from the closure list was the right thing for New England, the US Navy and the Nation. I am reassured that our Nation's dominance of the subsurface environment will continue uninterrupted into the future.

As Bob Ballard remarks in the enclosed article, the "magic that has ensured America's undersea dominance" will not be lost because of your action.

Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,


Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

*Thanks for your
courageous leader-
ship and support.*



SEP 12 2005

Received

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

General James T. Hill (USA, Ret)
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear James:

Jim

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All the best,

~~Rob Simmons~~
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

*Thanks for your
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ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
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Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr., (USN, Ret)
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Harold:

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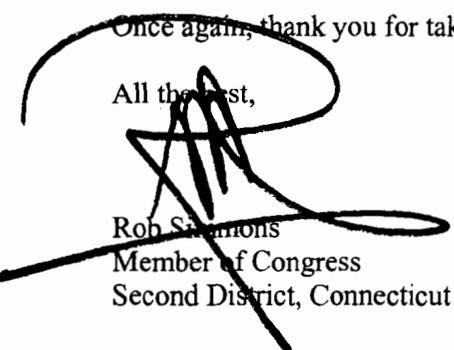
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Member of Congress
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Thanks in your
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ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
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August 25, 2005

The Honorable James H. Bilbray
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear James:

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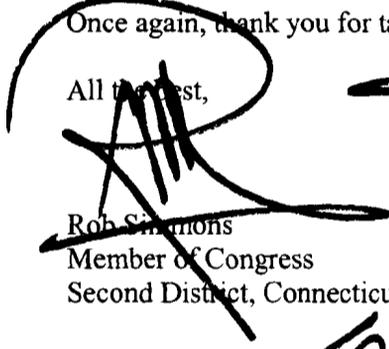
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

The Honorable Philip Coyle
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Philip:

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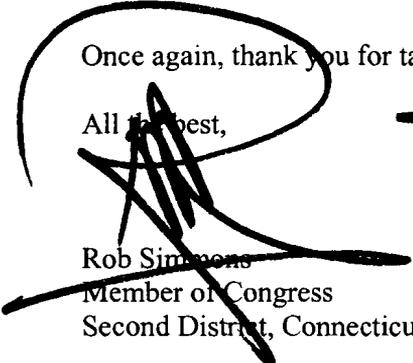
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Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,


Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

I thank you for your insights and support!



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ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

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August 25, 2005

The Honorable James V. Hansen
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear James: *Jim:*

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Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,

[Signature]
Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

*Thanks for all you
have done for the
Nation!*



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SEP 12 2005

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ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Samuel:

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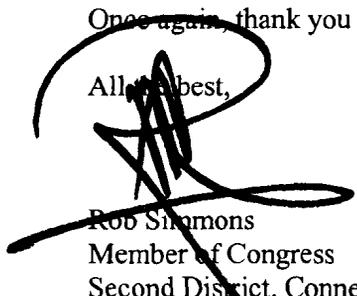
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Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,


Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

Thanks for serving
the Nation.



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

Brigadier General Sue E. Turner (USAF, Ret)
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Sue:

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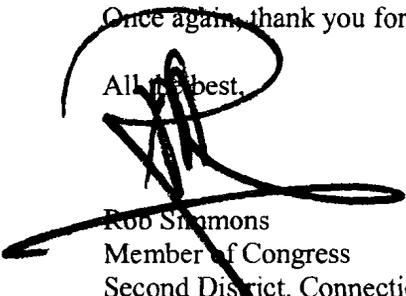
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Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,


Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

Thanks so much
in your support!



SEP 21 2005

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

BRAC Commission

SEP 12 2005

Received

ROB SIMMONS
SECOND DISTRICT
CONNECTICUT

August 25, 2005

General Lloyd W. Newton (USAF, Ret)
Base Realignment and Closure Commission

Dear Lloyd:

Fig:

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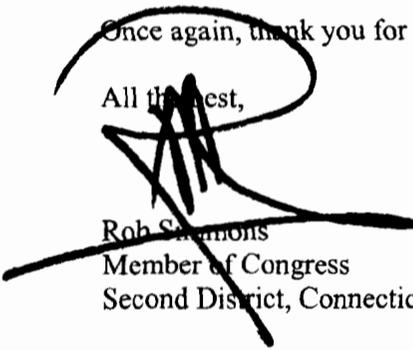
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Once again, thank you for taking on this difficult and patriotic duty.

All the best,


Rob Simmons
Member of Congress
Second District, Connecticut

You are our hero!! Thanks.

ROBERT BALLARD

Deep-sixing deep-sea dominance

OVER THE last few months, numerous arguments have been presented by a long list of well-educated and informed individuals why closing Submarine Base New London — as recommended by the Department of Defense — is a grave miscalculation by our country.

Their arguments over military value and cost issues seem convincing. But overlooked in the debate has been another important element — the close relationship that exists between our nation's submarine forces and its center of oceanographic research. It is a connection that, through the long history of our country, has come together to overcome every undersea threat we've ever faced.

Virtually every expedition that I have led or participated in has benefited from our relationship with the Navy at New London, Conn. Using Navy resources such as the NR 1, its deep-sea nuclear research submarine, we were able to explore places and find ships and new life that had never been seen before. These expeditions include the exploration of the Mid-Ocean Ridge, the discovery of warm water springs and their unusual animal communities in the Galapagos Rift, the discoveries of the RMS Titanic, the German battleship Bismarck, and 11 warships from the lost fleet of Guadalcanal, and the exploration of the luxury liner Lusitania.

In 1998 we teamed with the Navy



TIM BRINTON ILLUSTRATION

and National Geographic to locate lost ships of the Battle of Midway. These included the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, which lay at a depth of 16,650 feet. Without the Navy's deep-sea exploration capability, this would not have been possible.

But many people may not fully comprehend or appreciate the indebtedness the nation's submarine force has to the New England oceanographic research community. During World War II, it was the oceanographers of New England who used the physical characteristics of the thermocline — the ocean layer in which the most dramatic temperature changes occur — to teach our Navy how to hide its submarines from attack as well as how to sink German submarines that threatened our maritime lifelines to our allies.

In the Cold War, it was the oceanographers of New England who discovered the deep sound channel, ultimately resulting in development of the Sound Surveillance System. This is a system that provides deep-water, long-range detection capability, which proved critical during the Cold War in tracking Soviet submarines by their faint acoustic signals. Although even to this day the public doesn't know much about it, the system was an invaluable component in winning that war of nerves.

The oceanographic centers of the Northeast located at the University of New Hampshire, MIT, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the University of Rhode Island, the University of Connecticut, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, as well as others, are not moving. They represent arguably the world's foremost collection of oceanographic expertise.

Let's not forget the Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Newport, some 40 miles from the submarine base. With its work in research, development, and prototyping, it takes the results of exploration and moves them to conceptualization and eventually implementation — all in the interest of maintaining our undersea superiority.

It is no coincidence that Submarine Base New London, the academic institutions mentioned above, and the Naval Undersea Warfare

Center exist in relatively close proximity. They are all part of the seafaring culture of New England, going back to the settlement of this country.

Our submarine forces are an integral part of that culture. If the base were to close, I fear that our armed forces would lose a vital regional cultural dimension. The proposal put forth by the Defense Department would relocate Submarine Base New London to bases in the South. But while submarines can be moved and piers and buildings can be built elsewhere, a culture developed over hundreds of years can never be successfully replaced. This is an important reason why closing the base would be an incalculable loss for the region and the nation.

Having served as a naval officer and oceanographer in New England for more than 35 years, I speak from a position of knowing that when these two worlds are torn apart, the magic that has ensured America's undersea dominance will be lost forever.

If the Base Closure and Realignment Commission approves the recommendation to close the Submarine Base New London, we will be severing the spine that connects our nation's submarine might with its intellectual center, a united body that has well served this country since its birth.

Robert Ballard is founder and head of the Institute for Exploration at Mystic Marinelife Aquarium in Mystic, Conn.