

BRAC Commission

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Received

869 Kamo'i Place
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825
July 16, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi,

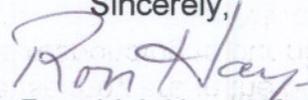
I do not envy you the tasks that lie ahead, although some of the decisions facing the BRAC Commission seem to be self evident. This view is based on 38 years of duty with the U.S. Navy, most of which was in Washington and the Atlantic Fleet. My last assignment prior to retirement in October 1988, however, was service as Commander in Chief Pacific Forces.

Much is appearing in the Honolulu media about the threat of closure or major realignment of the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. The emphasis is on the possible devastation to the employees and the local economy. These concerns are valid, of course, but in my judgment such factors are secondary.

In the Pacific theater one often hears the phrase "Tyranny of Distance". I can attest to the problem and to the fact that the vast distances that Pacific Forces face are generally underappreciated. We are fortunate to have naval forces homeported in Hawaii and Guam because they are in the best position to cope with the distances involved when they're responding to our national security interests. These forces depend on the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to provide essential preparedness and operational readiness.

Without a shipyard in the mid-Pacific the "Tyranny of Distance" is compounded. Readiness, responsiveness, effectiveness, and quality of life for our people would suffer. Military strategic value of the highest order is self evident for the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to those who have experienced Pacific Theater operations. Its continuing service to the fleet should be heartedly endorsed.

Sincerely,



Adm Ronald J. Hays USN (Ret)