



ALLIES FOR CHERRY POINT'S TOMORROW

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May 24, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Re: Realignment of F/A-18 Super Hornets from
NAS Oceana to MCAS Cherry Point

Dear Chairman Principi:

On behalf of Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow ("ACT"), I want you to know that the community surrounding MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, would welcome any additional F/A-18 aircraft that might be realigned to other bases. ACT is a local non-profit group comprised of local governments, businesses, educational institutions, and others concerned with regional economic development. We are committed to promoting MCAS Cherry Point and NAVAIR Depot Cherry Point.

In an April 12, 2005, letter to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, the Hampton Roads, Virginia group Citizens Concerned About Jet Noise ("CCAJN") proposed that the DoD consider realigning the F/A-18 aircraft currently deployed at NAS Oceana to other East Coast installations. Their proposal apparently is borne out of noise problems experienced in recent years by residents living near NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress. These noise concerns have been exacerbated by encroachment over many years by incompatible development in the vicinity of the base and practice field.

Questions have also been raised in recent days by BRAC Commission members about why DoD has not recommended realignment of the F/A-18s due to encroachment concerns at NAS Oceana. The airing of these questions by the Commission demonstrates that such an option remains a very timely and appropriate subject.

You will find a receptive and supportive region around the Cherry Point installation. ACT urges you to realign the F/A-18 aircraft home-based at NAS Oceana to MCAS Cherry Point. Such a realignment makes sense for several reasons:

1. **The alternative of home-basing all 10 operational squadrons plus the Fleet Replacement Squadron ("FRS") at MCAS Cherry Point was fully analyzed and deemed to be entirely feasible in the Final Environmental Impact Statement**

("FEIS") prepared in 2003 for the deployment of new F/A-18 Super Hornets on the East Coast (see Alternative 2 in FEIS). Similarly, the alternative of home-basing 6 operational squadrons plus the FRS at MCAS Cherry Point with the remainder of squadrons assigned to NAS Oceana also was fully analyzed and deemed to be entirely feasible (see Alternative 5A in FEIS). Consequently, realignment of the NAS Oceana aircraft to MCAS Cherry Point could be accomplished without the need to prepare a new Environmental Impact Statement.

2. **MCAS Cherry Point has over twice the acreage as NAS Oceana and could easily accommodate all 10 squadrons plus the FRS.** The only identified construction requirement to accommodate the F/A-18s would be a parallel runway. As indicated in the FEIS, ample room on the base is available for that purpose.
3. **The communities around MCAS Cherry Point are very military-friendly,** as evidenced by the extraordinary level of community support shown to the base and military personnel over many years. I can assure you that our communities would gladly welcome additional F/A-18 squadrons to the base.
4. **There are no long-term encroachment concerns** around MCAS Cherry Point because the local governments in the region have adopted the necessary zoning restrictions and noise disclosure requirements to ensure that MCAS Cherry Point is not threatened by encroachment. Residents within high noise zones around the base, even if all F/A-18 squadrons are based here, would number in the hundreds rather than thousands as at NAS Oceana.

We wish to convey to you in the strongest possible terms that the F/A-18 squadrons currently assigned to NAS Oceana would be welcome at MCAS Cherry Point. Realignment of the F/A-18s could prove to be a win-win situation for the Nation, DoD, the Navy, MCAS Cherry Point, and the residents of Hampton Roads. Accordingly, we urge you to give this option the fullest possible consideration as part of the BRAC process.

Sincerely yours,


Jimmy Sanders
President

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cc: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld
Governor Michael F. Easley
Lieutenant Governor Beverly E. Perdue
Senator Elizabeth Dole
Senator Richard Burr

Congressman Walter Jones
Congressman G. K. Butterfield
Mr. David Crotts
Mr. Daniel T. Hilton
Mr. Billy Dunn