

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

September 16, 2005

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

### Additional Notes

N/A

### National News Articles

Bush Endorses Plan To Close 22 Bases

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

ANG Chief Predicts Congress Will Amend  
Base Closure Process

### National News Articles

#### **Bush Endorses Plan To Close 22 Bases Decision Final Unless Congress Acts**

Clock Ticking for BRAC Opponents as  
Bush Approves Recommendations

Washington Post  
Deb Riechmann  
September 16, 2005

Bush forwards base-closing plan to  
Congress

President Bush yesterday endorsed a plan for closing 22 major military bases and reconfiguring 33 others, leaving their fate to Congress.

Bush Sends BRAC List To Congress

Bush had until next Friday to either accept the entire report from an independent commission and send it to Congress or return it to the commission for further work.

### Local News Articles

Norfolk Ships Unlikely To Follow Jets  
South, Analysts Suggest (Norfolk, VA)

The report will become final in 45 days unless Congress acts to reject it in full. Communities probably have little hope of a reprieve for their bases, as lawmakers have never rejected such reports.

Bush: Oceana Gains Political Edge  
(Jacksonville, FL)

Florida fared well in realignment of bases  
(Tampa, FL)

Bush's acceptance of closings not  
unexpected by Georgians (Columbus, GA)

Bush had said that for the process to be "nonpolitical" the commission's decision would have to stand. He got the report last Friday from the nine-member Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

### Opinions/Editorials

N/A

Bush's submission of the report comes as his administration and Congress are preoccupied with aiding the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast and other priorities. A GOP-led effort in the Senate to derail the base-closing process, which Republican leaders feared could embarrass them, has fizzled.

The commission said its recommendations would mean annual savings of \$4.2 billion, compared with \$5.4 billion under the plan it received in May from Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld had recommended closing 33 major bases and reducing personnel at 29 others.

The commission largely endorsed Rumsfeld's vision to restructure the domestic network of military bases to save billions of dollars over the next two decades and streamline the Army, Navy and Air Force.

But commissioners did recommend keeping open several major bases against the Pentagon's wishes, including a shipyard in Kittery, Maine; a submarine base in Groton, Conn.; and Air Force bases in South Dakota and New Mexico.

The commission denied politics played a role in any decisions, even as it voted to keep open bases in the home states of Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) and other senators leading the opposition. That all but eliminated the possibility of congressional intervention.

In the House, a majority of members overwhelmingly support this round of closures and consolidations, the first in a decade.

### **In the next decade . . . ANG Chief Predicts Congress Will Amend Base Closure Process**

Inside the Air Force  
Martin Matishak  
September 16, 2005

Air National Guard chief Lt. Gen. Daniel James this week predicted Congress within the next decade will approve changes to existing law aimed at giving state adjutants general a more

substantial role in the base realignment and closure process.

“Let me just make a prediction: There will be a law change,” James told Inside the Air Force Sept. 13.

In response to tension between Air Force brass and states officials caused by the 2005 BRAC round, James said during a brief interview at a conference in Washington that he expects lawmakers will “change certain laws” to prevent such agitation from creeping into the process in future years.

The three-star was referring to one of the most heated debates of the BRAC process, with state adjutants general (TAGs) arguing they were not properly consulted as the Air Force complied its portion of the Defense Department's base closure and realignment recommendations. Several states have since filed lawsuits challenging DOD's authority to strip them of their bases and aircraft.

The Pentagon had proposed shuttering 10 Air Force installations and realigning another 62 in its May 13 BRAC report. The majority of the recommendations put forth by the department called for a massive retooling of Guard and Air Force Reserve facilities, urging seven base closures and realignments.

The independent BRAC Commission last month voted to keep aircraft at 10 of the Guard and Reserve bases DOD had targeted for changes (ITAF, Sept. 2, p1). The panel also dispersed existing airframes among a number of bases so a flying unit would be located in nearly every state. The president and Congress still must approve the panel's recommendations.

James said one of the reasons why the Pentagon was resistant to including TAGs in the BRAC decision-making process was the possibility of the department's plans surfacing before it had completed its recommendations to the Commission.

“DOD was very concerned about what was being discussed in BRAC leaking to the states,

to the public, and starting a . . . wave of resistance before they even came to their final report,” he said.

The Air Force did bring three TAGs onto the service’s general officer steering group, but officials did so “fairly late in the process,” the ANG chief noted, during a conference in Washington.

“It was a great idea, wish I’d thought about it earlier. Wish Gen. Moseley - - actually who thought about it - - had thought of it earlier,” James said, referring to new Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley.

Air Force officials defended their actions throughout the BRAC round, saying Title 10 of the U.S. Code dictates the National Guard Bureau is the service’s single channel of communication to the states, as opposed to the other armed services, which allow direct communication between TAGs and active-duty officials.

“The strategy the Air Force used was different than other services and that’s why you saw the focus on the [ANG] and the states,” James said. He added the resulting controversy has him confident Congress will step in before the 2015 BRAC round and approve legislation tailored to allow easier communication between active-duty and ANG officials as well as the TAGs.

Because “there were just so many states out there that would have been affected,” the three-star predicted Congress “will change the guidance as to what BRAC can and can’t do and who they have to consult with, etc.

“That will happen -- I predict that,” he said.

Since the Commission made its final deliberations last month the relationship between ANG officials and TAGs with the active duty Air Force has thawed, with all sides optimistic about being able to repair the strains brought on by the BRAC process, ITAF reported earlier this month (ITAF, Sept. 2, p1).

Yet several states -- Connecticut, Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee and Pennsylvania -- argue the Pentagon does not have the power to shut down or realign bases and have filed lawsuits aimed at changing or blocking the commission’s recommendations. After being defeated in federal court, Missouri and Illinois lost separate appeals that would have blocked the BRAC Commission’s proposed moves there.

However, a federal court last week told Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) that he could appeal again if the president and Congress agree with the commission-approved recommendation to remove all 15 F-16 fighters from the 183rd Fighter Wing at Springfield Air National Guard Base. Blagojevich has indicated that he will push for another appeal if President Bush and lawmakers sign on to that recommendation.

The independent BRAC panel submitted its final report to the president Sept. 8. In a cover letter accompanying the document, BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi noted the approved proposal to remove all 17 A-10 attack aircraft from the 103rd Fighter Wing at Bradley ANG Base, CT, was not included due to that state’s lawsuit.

“If the injunction is later vacated, reversed, stayed, or otherwise withdrawn, it is the intent of the commission that the entirety of the recommendation be a part of the commission’s report,” the letter reads.

In a related move, the Supreme Court last week declined to intervene in the ongoing power struggle between the states and the Pentagon.

Bush forwarded the commission’s report to Congress Sept. 15.

The report will become law if Congress does not object to its contents within 45 legislative days.

At press time (Sept. 15) spokesmen for the House Armed Services Committee and a spokesman for the BRAC Commission had not returned phone calls seeking comment for this story.

## **Clock Ticking for BRAC Opponents as Bush Approves Recommendations**

CQ Today

John M. Donnelly

September 15, 2005

Lawmakers opposed to the military base-closing process now have 45 legislative days to kill it, after President Bush on Thursday approved the recommendations of the Base Realignment and Closure commission.

The president's acceptance — more than a week before his required deadline — also clears one obstacle from bringing the \$491.6 billion fiscal 2006 defense authorization bill (S 1042 — S Rept 109-69) to the Senate floor.

The proposal to reorganize hundreds of U.S. military bases will become law unless Congress passes a joint resolution of disapproval. Most experts believe that is unlikely, largely because so many House members' districts were spared large closures. Those lawmakers probably will support the commission's decisions rather than invite a new round that could make their bases potential targets.

In the previous four BRAC rounds, joint resolutions of disapproval have been introduced, but all have been defeated.

The president could have sent the proposal back to the base closure commission with recommended changes, which would have added a month to the process.

Sen. John W. Warner, R-Va., said on Sept. 13 that the defense authorization bill, which was pulled from the floor in late July, should come back to the floor only after the president made his BRAC decision. Warner's objective in waiting was to decrease the chances that senators would use the authorization bill as a vehicle to try to delay the base-closure process.

The bill already is likely to have a drawn-out and heated floor debate. A base-closure amendment only would have lengthened the bill's time on the floor.

## **Bush forwards base-closing plan to Congress**

The Associated Press

Robert Burns

September 16, 2005

U.S. President George W. Bush has endorsed and sent to Congress a plan to close 22 major military bases and reconfigure 33 others - the first consolidation of the Pentagon's far-flung network of bases since 1995.

Bush could have sent the controversial plan back to the independent base-closing commission that developed it, but as expected he chose instead to forward it to Congress. The plan will become final in 45 days unless Congress acts to reject it in full. In all past base-closing rounds Congress has allowed it to proceed.

"This list is going to become law," said Loren Thompson, defense analyst with the Lexington Institute. "This process had created winners in addition to losers in many communities. The legislative majority required to reject the recommendation certainly isn't there."

He said that with Hurricane Katrina to deal with, members of Congress want to put the base closing matters behind them.

Some have questioned whether the base-closing plan ought to be reconsidered in light of Katrina and the concerns raised by some about how effectively the federal government responded to the disaster. The base-closing commission voted to shut down one of the military installations in Mississippi severely damaged by Katrina - Naval Station Pascagoula, as well as the inpatient care facility at the hard-hit Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi.

Sen. John Warner, a Virginia Republican and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, issued a statement after the White House announced Bush's decision Thursday indicating that he expected the plan to be implemented in full. That includes the base-

closing commission's decision to keep open the Navy's air station in Oceana, Virginia.

Earlier, Bush had said that for the process to be "nonpolitical" the commission's decision would have to stand. He received the report Sept. 9 from the nine-member Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

Bush's decision to accept the base-closing recommendations comes as his administration and Congress are preoccupied with aiding the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast and addressing other priorities, including the war in Iraq. A GOP-led effort in the Senate to derail the base-closing process, which Republican leaders feared could embarrass them, has fizzled.

The commission said its recommendations would mean annual savings of US\$4.2 billion ([euro]3.4 billion), compared with US\$5.4 billion ([euro]4.4 billion) under the plan it received in May from Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld had recommended closing 33 major bases and realigning 29 others, but the commission decided after a series of hearings to modify his plan.

The commission recommended keeping open several major bases against the Pentagon's wishes, including a shipyard in Kittery, Maine, a submarine base in Groton, Connecticut, and Air Force bases in South Dakota and New Mexico.

The commission denied politics had played a role in any decisions, even as it voted to keep open bases in the home states of Sen. John Thune, a Republican from South Dakota, and other senators leading the opposition. That all but eliminated the possibility of congressional intervention.

In the House, the vast majority of members have supported this round of closures and consolidations, which are the first in a decade.

Thune praised Bush for approving the report, which included a reprieve for Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota. The Pentagon sought to shutter the base that is home to half of the nation's B1-B bombers.

"Although I still believe we should not be closing U.S. military facilities while at war, I commend the BRAC commission for taking an independent and objective approach to this process," Thune said.

Military analysts have said this may be the last chance the White House and Pentagon have to save money by shuttering bases. Congress probably will resist approving an additional round of closures, analysts say, given the large amount of heartache lawmakers experienced.

Congress reluctantly authorized this round of closures only after the White House threatened to veto an entire defense bill if it did not give the Pentagon the go-ahead.

## **Bush Sends BRAC List To Congress Move means sub base is about out of danger**

New London Day  
Robert A. Hamilton  
September 16, 2005

President Bush forwarded the military base closure list to Congress on Thursday, eight days ahead of schedule, effectively ending any threat to the Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

Supporters of the Groton base had been holding their breath to see if Bush would send the list back to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, which rejected the Pentagon's recommendation to close Groton. By law, Bush could have asked for a reconsideration of the decision.

"It means he's not going to fight it," said U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District. "For all intents and purposes, the BRAC (base realignment and closure) process is over, and we did it."

Bush had promised several times over the summer not to tinker with the commission's recommendations. When he received the report calling for closing 22 bases and changing 33 others, he moved swiftly to keep that promise.

At mid-afternoon Thursday, he notified key members of Congress that he would be sending the commission's recommendations over before the end of the day, even though the law gave him until Sept. 23.

About 90 minutes later, he sent a letter stating, "I certify that I approve all the recommendations contained in the commission's report."

"All of us recall the dark and dreary day when the Pentagon tried to discard and dismantle our nation's pre-eminent submarine facility," said U.S. Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn. "The president has now agreed with the BRAC Commission and we're one more critically important step closer toward restoring a brighter day for eastern Connecticut."

The president's quick action — he received the list just a week before endorsing it — means that the Pentagon apparently has decided to drop what at times was a determined effort to close Groton.

"The fact that the president has so quickly responded and sent this to Congress indicates there's no activity on the part of the Defense Department to overturn any of the recommendations, which is an extremely positive development," said John C. Markowicz, chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition, which had fought to overturn the proposal.

"That means the schedule has been significantly accelerated," Markowicz said. "It could be over by the end of the month."

While Congress could reject the list by a joint resolution, most consider that unlikely because the most controversial base closure recommendations were rejected. Any resolutions must be introduced within 10 days; Congress must act before Nov. 6.

"Obviously, there is still one hurdle yet to be overcome so we can't afford to take anything for granted," Dodd said.

But Gov. M. Jodi Rell noted that the law only allows the president, not Congress, to send it back to the commission for more work.

"The worst that can happen now is that the Congress rejects the BRAC recommendations altogether — in which case there would be no changes whatsoever at the Groton base or elsewhere in Connecticut," Rell said.

"Of course, the fight to preserve the 103rd Fighter Wing of the Connecticut Air National Guard (at Bradley International Airport) goes on," Rell said. She has gone to federal court in an attempt to block that closure, because she contends the federal government cannot pull the planes out of the state without her approval.

"We are assured by the appeals court's recent decision that we will have our day in court, and we are confident that the unambiguous law making a governor the commander-in-chief of a state's National Guard will be upheld," Rell said. "I look forward to making that case and putting the final touch on this decision."

Dodd said he will also continue to oppose the commission's recommendation to close the Air National Guard installation at Bradley, as did U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn.

"I am thrilled that Congress has received the president's report accepting the recommendation of the BRAC Commission to keep Submarine Base New London open," Lieberman said. "This is an enormous victory not only for Connecticut, but for our national security."

"However, I remain disappointed that the decision to remove the A-10 Fighters from the Bradley Air National Guard base has not been overturned ..."

Supporters of the Groton base said that for the first time since the Pentagon list was released May 13, they feel they can relax.

"I had every expectation that the president would live up to his commitment," said Thomas A. Sheridan, president of the Chamber of

Commerce of Eastern Connecticut and a member of the coalition.

Simmons noted that while the Congress has 45 working days by law to consider any resolution to reject the list, “In the past, no resolution of disapproval has ever been successful.”

“I’m ecstatic to have it behind me,” Simmons said. “I never supported having a BRAC process in wartime, and when the Department of Defense put our base on the list on May 13 it was a terrible event. Team Connecticut has done a wonderful job of fighting that recommendation. We’ve been successful, and now we can move on to other things, but I am very glad it’s over.”

### Local News Articles

#### **Norfolk Ships Unlikely To Follow Jets South, Analysts Suggest**

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

Dale Eisman,

September 16, 2005

WASHINGTON — The Navy is unlikely to relocate its Norfolk-based aircraft carriers to Florida should fighter jets now based at Oceana Naval Air Station be shifted to the Sunshine State, independent analysts suggested Thursday.

Despite warnings by Gov. Mark R. Warner that the flattops likely would follow their planes, the analysts said the Navy would gain little if any warfighting advantage in such a shift and would bear considerable expense.

In any case, there probably isn’t room at Naval Station Mayport, the Navy’s lone Florida port, for more than two carriers, they added.

One carrier, the John F. Kennedy, already is based in Mayport; the Navy hopes to retire it next year and has signaled its long-term desire to move in another, so far unidentified flattop.

At the Pentagon, a defense official said Thursday there is no current plan to reassign any carriers. And in Richmond, the governor’s press

secretary said Warner’s predictions of future transfers were based on the governor’s own analysis, not any warning from the Navy or the Defense Department.

The federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission wants more than 200 Navy fighters shifted from Oceana to Cecil Field, a former Navy base near Jacksonville, unless Virginia and the city of Virginia Beach clear hundreds of homes and businesses from high-risk areas near Oceana.

Warner, trying to rally local residents and officials to a save-Oceana effort, has used the prospect of carrier transfers to argue that the entire region has a stake in Oceana’s future.

The loss of a carrier would drain 5,000 jobs and an estimated \$188 million per year from the local economy.

“It seems perfectly self-evident that if you start moving air wings, that carrier groups would follow,” said Kevin Hall, Warner’s spokesman.

Navy officials, meanwhile, have cited Oceana’s proximity to the five Norfolk-based carriers as an important reason for retaining the Virginia Beach base.

But retired Vice Adm. Jack Shanahan, a former 2nd Fleet Commander now living in Florida, termed Warner’s argument a “red herring” and argued that it doesn’t make “a bit of difference” to carrier operations if the ships and their aircraft are based in different communities.

Retired Capt. J.R. Davis, a former Navy pilot who now directs the Tailhook Association, a naval aviators’ group, said he twice flew with an entire air wing from the West Coast to the Atlantic to deploy with Norfolk-based carriers. The moves were “seamless,” he said.

Shanahan noted that when carriers are at home, their aircraft operate from land bases such as Oceana or Cecil Field. For decades, planes routinely moved from Cecil Field to Norfolk-based carriers operating off the South Carolina

or Georgia coasts, Shanahan said, and they could easily do so again.

Florida representatives made much the same argument last month in urging the BRAC Commission to reopen Cecil Field and shift more than 200 Navy fighters from Oceana.

The Navy bases its West Coast fighters more than 300 miles from its ships in San Diego, retired Adm. Robert J. Natter, now a consultant to Florida, told the commission. "During my entire time in the Navy ... I never heard one complaint from the Pacific Fleet about the distance," he said.

In the wake of such comments, Floridians will be hard pressed to use the arrival of Oceana's fighters – should that occur – as a lever to get more carriers moved to Mayport, said Jeremiah Gertler, a former congressional staffer now tracking BRAC-related issues at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Gertler said there also are questions about the Mayport base's ability to handle the 3,000 additional sailors and families that would come with the assignment of a second carrier to the base.

Moving a Norfolk-based flattop to Mayport also would require the Navy to spend up to \$200 million on new equipment and facilities needed to service nuclear-powered ships. The Kennedy is the only Atlantic Fleet carrier that operates on oil-fired boilers.

The Navy is seeking to begin environmental studies on the possible location of a nuclear carrier in Mayport once the Kennedy is retired. But Congress has ordered the Kennedy kept in service until at least early 2006 and the service is expected to take several years to bring in any replacement ship.

**Bush: Oceana Gains Political Edge  
Jet base oversight moving from BRAC**  
Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, FL)  
J. Taylor Rushing

September 15, 2005

TALLAHASSEE -- Gov. Jeb Bush told legislators Wednesday that the Navy's master jet base in Virginia is Florida's for the taking but expressed private concern about a little-noticed shift in oversight authority and opposing voices that still have to be heard.

Bush, retired Air Force Gen. James Davis and retired Navy Adm. Robert Natter told the state House Military and Veteran Affairs Committee that there are "significant challenges" to Oceana Naval Air Station staying in Virginia Beach. In its report submitted to President Bush last week, the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended moving the base to Jacksonville's Cecil Field unless Virginia develops plans to relieve encroachment around Oceana by next year.

But after Wednesday's hearing, the governor acknowledged he was worried about how Oceana's progress will be judged. As part of its final report, the BRAC commission had shifted oversight for that duty from the Government Accountability Office to the Department of Defense because of legal precedence.

Bush said that makes it more likely that politics - - and particularly U.S. Sen. John Warner, a former secretary of the Navy and chairman of the Armed Services Committee -- could influence the decision to keep the base in Virginia or move it to Florida.

"I would have preferred it to stay with the BRAC Commission, because I heard their voice loud and clear," the governor said. "Anytime you can have a decision-making process where political influence has a lot to do with it, it improves Oceana's chance, to be honest with you, because that's their only chance."

Bush and House Speaker Allan Bense told the committee Wednesday that up to \$200 million may be doled out by Tallahassee in a special session sometime before the end of the year. The money would be combined with about \$50 million in city money to fund potential military housing costs and to relocate businesses from

Cecil Field, which was closed in 1999 and turned into a business park.

But Bush also was pressed Wednesday by committee member Audrey Gibson, D-Jacksonville, about opposition to the Cecil Field proposal on the city's Westside. The governor told Gibson that the base would be phased in over the next six years and that he and Mayor John Peyton will consider residents' concerns.

Peyton has launched a 17-member panel to study how the plan could accommodate those concerns, and Bush said he will largely defer that task to the panel. He repeated a claim of Peyton's, that the opportunity to reopen Cecil Field arose before anyone had time to prepare the public.

"Clearly the city has -- and if I need to be a part of this as well, the state -- has some explaining to do to make sure that people understand the benefits of this," Bush said.

Gibson later said she accepted Bush's answer but that the issue remains unresolved.

"His answer was that apparently the mayor has some work to do," she said.

Committee Chairman Stan Jordan, R-Jacksonville, suggested the benefits of bringing the base to Jacksonville are worthy even if not all residents agree. He asked Bush to compare the benefits of Cecil's two possible futures -- business park or jet base -- to Northeast Florida.

Bush said most of the businesses that would be displaced from Cecil will likely simply relocate elsewhere in Jacksonville and that Oceana represents a far bigger prize than any potential future firms that were being lured to the area anyway.

"In terms of economic impact, this far exceeds any of the options we were pursuing," he said.

### **Florida fared well in realignment of bases**

Tampa Tribune (Tampa, FL)  
Jerome R. Stockfisch

September 15, 2005

TALLAHASSEE -- Military experts briefed lawmakers on how Florida fared in the latest round of base realignments -- "very well" -- and the state ratcheted up its efforts to snatch a huge air base from Virginia.

Members of the House Military and Veteran Affairs Committee were told Wednesday that the state will add 3,720 jobs under changes recommended to President Bush by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

That includes the addition of 152 military and 83 civilian jobs in Tampa as MacDill Air Force Base absorbs some refueling operations from bases in Grand Forks, N.D., and Selfridge, Mich.

"The bottom line is Florida did very well," said Gen. James B. Davis, co-chairman of a state advisory council on base closures.

Should Florida succeed in persuading military analysts to move operations from hemmed-in Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia to Cecil Field near Jacksonville, "those numbers ... will be dwarfed considerably," Davis said.

Oceana, the Navy's busiest jet base, houses more than 200 aircraft, and the move would switch anywhere from 11,000 to 14,000 jobs to Jacksonville.

Gov. Jeb Bush offered up Cecil Field after the Pentagon gave officials in Virginia and the municipalities surrounding Oceana an ultimatum: Start acquiring some 1,800 homes in areas vulnerable to crashes and tackle "encroachment" of the base via zoning changes within seven months or the base closes.

The governor said that with a little hard work, Oceana is "ours for the taking."

Cecil Field was closed in 1999 and now is a commerce park used by aviation-related industries.

Bush said the Cecil Field issue likely will be included in a special legislative session this fall.

The governor has committed up to \$ 200 million to buy existing leases at the base and provide housing, and he said quick action by the Legislature would send a clear welcome signal.

Bush praised lawmakers for repeatedly addressing "soft issues" that likely played a significant role in sparing Florida from military cutbacks.

From the 2000 crackdown on the title-loan industry, requested by the military, to last year's passage of a family readiness program, "all of this has been noted by Congress, by the Defense Department and by the BRAC commission," Bush said. "What they've concluded is that Florida is a place that is military-friendly in every way."

In Tampa, the new round of BRAC action will bring four KC-135 aircraft to MacDill with the realignment of Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

Another move realigns the assets of the 927th Air Refueling Wing in Selfridge, Mich., to the 6th Air Mobility Wing at MacDill. There also are military clinic upgrades in the package.

St. Petersburg will see a net loss of 12 military jobs with the closure of a Navy Reserve center.

### **Bush's acceptance of closings not unexpected by Georgians**

The Associated Press (Columbus, GA)  
September 16, 2005

ATLANTA - President Bush's decision to endorse a plan to close four military bases in Georgia came as no surprise, but it was a disappointment for those in the state who fought to save the bases in the state.

"That's what we expected," said Fred Bryant of the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee. "The president said some time ago that he was going to accept the recommendation of the Base Closure and Realignment

Committee. So that's basically what we expected."

"We are very disappointed," said George Huban, a member of a Navy task force in Athens who fought to keep open the small Navy Supply Corps School. "We don't think it's a good decision. Congress has 45 days to look at this thing. I think we've reached a point where we've gone too far. I think Congress ought to take a look."

If Congress goes along with the BRAC report, Georgia will see the closing of the Naval Air Station-Atlanta, Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson in the Atlanta area and the supply school in Athens.

"The public officials cooked up a system to keep themselves out of the loop," Huban said of the independent BRAC.

Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., also expressed disappointment that the president did not see fit to reverse the commission's actions involving Georgia.

"In the end, Georgia still stands to make significant gains from this round of BRAC at Fort Benning and elsewhere, and that is a testament to our state's critical role in our national defense," Isakson said.

Gov. Sonny Perdue issued a statement Thursday night.

"The decision to close Fort Gillem, Fort McPherson, Naval Air Station Atlanta and the Navy Supply School in Athens deserved further examination and scrutiny due to the military value these installations provide our armed forces," the governor said.

"I am proud of the effort and hard work put forward by the entire Georgia congressional delegation, especially Sen. Chambliss and Sen. Isakson, and our many state and local partners as we prepared for this process over the last several years. We will work with each of the affected communities to move quickly on redevelopment plans for these properties."