

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

May 25, 2005

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### Department of Defense Releases

#### **Air National Guard leaders focus on BRAC**

Air Force Print News  
Army Master Sgt. Bob Haskell  
May 24, 2005

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) -- Air National Guard leaders are urging citizen Airmen nationwide to remain focused on their missions while they and others consider the organization's future during this year's Base Realignment and Closure process.

Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, ANG director, and Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith, ANG command chief master sergeant, are looking at BRAC from a pragmatic perspective on behalf of the organization's more than 106,000 guardsmen.

Some Guard units may have to take on different missions, General James said. But the force will not be reduced because "BRAC only affects infrastructure. It doesn't eliminate people, missions and jobs," he said.

"The harsh reality is that the Air Force will be buying considerably less force structure -- airplanes -- than we now fly," General James said. "That means we may close units, combine units or share airplanes. We expect to do some of each."

Seven states would have no Guard flying units if the BRAC Commission, President Bush and Congress accept the Pentagon's proposals, the general said.

The Defense Department is still configured for the Cold War that ended about 15 years ago and that it must change to accommodate "the new demands of the war against extremism and other evolving challenges," defense officials said.

The four previous BRAC rounds eliminated about 21 percent of excess U.S. military

infrastructure and reallocated billions of dollars to pressing military needs, officials said. If approved, this year's recommendations should result in a net savings of \$48.8 billion over the next 20 years.

While acknowledging that Defense Department recommendations could affect 30 Guard flying units with closures or realignments, General James said this is only the opening round and that "if your flying mission is affected, I will do everything I can to secure a future mission that is relevant and funded."

The BRAC Commission will visit the affected facilities, conduct hearings, examine the service recommendations and make independent decisions about what to forward to the president for his approval by Sept. 8. The president has until Sept. 23 to inform the commission and Congress if he approves the commission's recommendations. Congress then has 45 days to reject the entire list, or it becomes law.

"The Air Force of the future will be flying fewer airplanes, but there will be significant needs for other missions -- intelligence, security police, space, medics, (unmanned aerial vehicles), air mobility divisions, expeditionary combat support, etc.," General James said.

"I will work hard with the Air Force to see that each state is covered with appropriate missions which provide for both state and federal roles and the homeland security aspects of each, and I will distribute a transition plan as soon as possible," he said.

"Overall, BRAC equals transformation," Chief Smith said. "The Air National Guard is always changing. Change has been done by generations before, and now it's our turn."

Observing that any BRAC implementations would take place through 2011, Chief Smith said "the mission of the Air National Guard must go on. Our deployments, operational readiness inspections and training must continue. As senior (noncommissioned officers), we must have the mission first and our people always. Remember our people.

"This is not the same Air National Guard that we older members remember from 30-plus years ago," he said. "And it will not be the same Air National Guard 30 years from now."

"These are difficult times," General James said. "They demand clear heads and hard work. Work with me, (and) I will work with you. Together we will assure a future for the Air National Guard with new missions in a new world."

### National News Articles

#### **Labor Dept. Offers Base-Closing Grants**

The Associated Press  
Mary Clare Jalonick  
May 24, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Labor Department said Tuesday it will provide up to \$1 million in planning funds for communities that may lose civilian jobs due to military base closings.

Emily Stover DeRocco, assistant secretary for employment and training administration, sent a letter to state work force agencies outlining federal grants eligible to help communities plan for transition should bases in their areas end up on the final list of closings.

DeRocco said that in past rounds of base closings, "communities which undertook effective and timely planning successfully transitioned from a defense to a non-defense economy."

The Pentagon released its recommendations for closure and realignment May 13. An independent commission is now reviewing the list, and may make changes. The list then goes to President Bush before it is sent to Congress for approval.

DeRocco said the Labor Department believes the time between the recommendations and final congressional approval "is the most effective time to plan for the services necessary to assist affected workers and communities."

The letter says the grants should be awarded by June 30, and only communities that would be affected by the Pentagon's recommended list are eligible.

The department recommends that states use the money for training potentially displaced workers, staffing transition efforts, hiring consultants to deal with local agencies and developing long-range goals for economic development.

Though the limit for the first round of grants is \$1 million per community, the department says more money will be eligible once Congress has made the final decision, probably in November. DeRocco said the awards will be granted based on the number and size of facilities affected, the potential economic impact and the ability of the work force already in place to deal with the transition.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said the grants would be a "much-needed solace" if South Dakota's Ellsworth Air Force Base remains on the list. The Pentagon recommended the base be closed, moving 411 civilian jobs out of Rapid City.

Thune and lawmakers from other affected states are pushing President Bush and military officials to save their bases.

Republicans from the New York delegation lobbied Bush and adviser Karl Rove aboard Air Force One on Tuesday, asking him to save Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

Rep. Sherwood Boehlert said Bush told him: "You're in the same position I was in in '95, you're making the same case and I hear you, but you've got to make that case to the commission."

In Texas, two members of the congressional delegation said the Army failed to consider 37,600 acres available for training at Fort Hood, Texas, when it recommended removing nearly 8,500 troops from the base by 2011. The Army had based its recommendation on a finding that Fort Hood did not have enough training space.

Democratic Rep. Chet Edwards and Republican Rep. John Carter said they met with Pentagon officials who confirmed the land was not taken into account.

## **One Georgia Naval Base Hits the Jackpot**

The Associated Press

Russ Bynum

May 23, 2005

ST. MARYS, Ga. -- Ann Wade and her daughter have weathered some stormy economic tides over the past three years at Lil' Seabag, their tailor shop about a mile from Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.

When a paper company, the area's largest private employer, closed in 2002, Wade and daughter Kelley Smith survived by embroidering shirts for maid services and other small business started by laid-off workers.

That same summer, nuclear-missile-armed submarines began leaving Kings Bay for their new home port on the West Coast. A total of five nuclear subs, half of the base's fleet, will have shipped out by this fall \_ bad news when sewing and altering Navy uniforms is about half your business.

Now Wade has a new concern, one she didn't expect until the Pentagon released a list of the military bases it wants to shut down and those that will inherit their missions: "We'll probably have to hire some new seamstresses."

Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base hit the jackpot in the Pentagon's base-closure recommendations announced earlier this month \_ becoming the biggest community winner in the shake-up with a gain of more than 5,000 jobs.

Many residents had feared for their economic future in 2002 when the Navy began shuffling its undersea arsenal to the West Coast to focus on the Pacific theater, which includes the Persian Gulf and Korean Peninsula.

"We were constantly on the chopping block. We lost a huge business, we lost the submarines, and

people began to wonder," said Christine Daniel, president of the Camden County Chamber of Commerce. "So this is exciting that we're able to regain some of the things we've lost and get a little more."

The Defense Department's plan to save billions of dollars calls for closing or reducing forces at 62 major U.S. bases and reconfiguring 775 others. A commission will review the Pentagon's list before submitting it to President Bush in September.

Though other regions took a hit, many military communities in the Southeast were among the biggest winners, with Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Alabama set to gain at least 35,000 total jobs.

The coastal Georgia community of St. Marys will gain 5,034 jobs \_ including new ones created off-base, expanding its overall work force by 22 percent. It would be the only U.S. city to see a double-digit percentage increase from the military shifts.

"This was at the high-end of my most optimistic scenario," said retired Capt. Walter Yourstone, a former Kings Bay commander who led the local lobbying effort to expand the base. "My worst case was we would stay the same \_ no growth and no loss."

Kings Bay has been slated to pick up 3,367 jobs, raising the base's military, civilian and contract workers by 42 percent. It could pick up an undetermined number of fast-attack submarines currently stationed in Groton, Conn.

Yourstone and other community leaders caution that nothing has been finalized. Connecticut leaders planned a fierce campaign to keep their base from being mothballed.

"We're New Englanders, and we fight," Groton Mayor Harry Watson vowed after the closure list was announced.

Residents of St. Marys and surrounding Camden County can empathize with their northern neighbors.

Kings Bay has been the backbone of Camden County's economy since the 1980s, when it became the East Coast base for Navy subs armed with Trident ballistic missiles. With an annual payroll of \$500 million, it employs roughly half the county's workers.

The base covers about 25 square miles, and roughly a fourth of its developable acreage remains available for new construction, said Capt. Mike McKinnon, the base's commanding officer.

In recent years, Camden County managed to offset much of its job losses with steady residential growth among retirees and commuters working in neighboring Florida. As a result, home prices have skyrocketed.

The county's population reached 43,660 in the 2000 Census, reflecting 45 percent growth over the previous decade. Gated waterfront subdivisions have continued to crop up, and homes that once sold for \$80,000 now fetch \$120,000.

"I've been doing real estate here over 20 years. It was all initially 95 percent military driven. It's not anymore," said Nancy Stasinis, broker for ERA Kings Bay Realty. "If a lot of people descend on us at once, we would have a difficult time in the lower price range," she said.

Meanwhile, local taxpayers will have to pay for new infrastructure. Officials already have earmarked \$18 million for various projects.

"We're having growing pains," St. Marys Mayor Deborah Hase said, "but they feel pretty good."

## **U.S. Base Closures Cause Jitters Abroad**

The Associated Press

May 25, 2005

TOKYO (AP) -- Just outside Tokyo, city officials gathered nearly 60,000 signatures in one month to stop the possible expansion of a U.S. Army camp. In South Korea, 1,000 workers fearing for their jobs rallied outside the main

base there and vowed a bigger protest was ahead.

While the United States works out its biggest set of domestic military base closures in decades, countries from Germany to South Korea are bracing for a major restructuring as well, with new hosts being courted and as many as 70,000 U.S. troops expected to head home over the next decade.

Mirroring the domestic shake-up, negotiations are underway for bases abroad to be shut down, or, in other cases, beefed up. But with few formal announcements, the overseas restructuring has everyone from peace activists to labor unions on edge.

In Japan, where U.S. troop levels are expected to stay about the same at 50,000-plus, even rumors of relatively minor moves have generated jitters.

"Our long-standing position is that we want the base here closed," said Hiroyuki Suzuki, an official in Zama, where the U.S. Army's Japan headquarters are located. Camp Zama is rumored to be a possible new home for several hundred soldiers currently assigned to I Corps at Fort Lewis, Wash.

"We're worried that the base will become more permanent," Suzuki said. Zama officials organized the petition drive to give weight to their opposition and make it more difficult for the Japanese government to accept an expansion plan.

Across the Japan Sea, workers in South Korea are preparing to fight the opposite possibility.

Lt. Gen. Charles Campbell, chief of staff for U.S. Forces Korea, said last month the American military would lay off up to 1,000 Korean workers, about 10 percent of the total, and cut contracts for services by up to 20 percent over the next two years.

Some 1,000 workers and their supporters protested outside Yongsan base, in central Seoul, earlier this month and the Korean Employers Union said it will hold a larger rally

on June 3 if the United States does not repeal its plan for layoffs.

About 32,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea. Several thousand U.S. soldiers have been reassigned from Korea to Iraq and more are slated to depart in the next few years, leaving about 24,500.

Though anti-base groups have long been active in South Korea, Okinawa and other places where U.S. troops are stationed, the current atmosphere of change has emboldened many.

Earlier this month a few thousand members of Hanchongryon -- South Korea's largest student group -- staged a demonstration and tore down wire fences at an air force base in Gwangju, demanding the United States remove its Patriot missiles and withdraw from South Korea altogether.

The group, which is outlawed by the South Korean government yet still operates openly, has dubbed June a "period of anti-United States and anti-war struggle," and more demonstrations are expected, according to an editorial in the Joong Ang Daily newspaper.

Japan, Germany and South Korea have long been the major destinations for U.S. troops abroad.

But, with its budget and manpower pushed to the limit by fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military is rethinking the distribution of its assets.

The most prominent upshot has been the Defense Department's plan to save billions of dollars by closing or reducing forces at 62 U.S. bases and reconfiguring 775 others. A commission will review the Pentagon's list before submitting it to President Bush in September.

In connection with the domestic changes, some 13,500 troops would be pulled from Germany and South Korea.

Overall, however, Bush has said he intends to bring home 70,000 troops -- along with 100,000 family members and civilian employees -- in the next 10 years, while increasing the U.S. presence in such countries as Poland, Romania and Uzbekistan.

For Germany, the Army plans to bring home the 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division, with a mobile brigade using lighter Stryker armored vehicles added at the Grafenwoehr base in Bavaria, and another regular brigade also stationed in the area.

There are currently some 112,000 military personnel stationed in Europe, and U.S. officials have previously said about 40 percent were expected to remain after the restructuring, including some 25,000 soldiers in Germany.

### **Lawmakers use Air Force One ride to lobby for military bases**

The Associated Press  
May 25, 2005

President Bush and top adviser Karl Rove spent two hours aboard Air Force One Tuesday talking with four New York Republicans about everything from base closings to fly-fishing.

Bush flew to Greece, N.Y., to pitch his plan to overhaul Social Security, inviting Reps. Thomas Reynolds, Sherwood Boehlert, James Walsh and John "Randy" Kuhl along for the ride.

Boehlert and Reynolds used part of the chat to make the case to spare Rome and Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station from hundreds of job cuts under a military restructuring plan.

As part of the Base Realignment and Closure process, the Pentagon has recommended moving many science and accounting jobs out of Rome and closing the Niagara Falls base. A commission is studying those recommendations before it submits its list of proposed closures to Bush in September.

Boehlert, whose district includes the Rome facilities, said Bush was sympathetic because he

was governor of Texas in 1995 during the last BRAC round.

"He said, 'You're in the same position I was in in '95, you're making the same case and I hear you, but you've got to make that case to the commission,'" Boehlert said. "I reminded him of the outstanding work being done (in Rome) and he knows it too."

The president's drive to create personal accounts within Social Security has yet to generate much enthusiasm among voters, and part of his pitch Tuesday was aimed at Republican lawmakers like Reynolds, Boehlert, Walsh and Kuhl.

The lawmakers have praised the president without committing to his plan to create personal accounts for those under 55, saying they need to see a detailed plan or bill before making a decision.

The visit may not have changed minds, Boehlert said, but he thought Bush's words showed the president is trying a new approach.

"He's changed somewhat. He's discovered it's hard to convince many people that there's a crisis when in the same breath he acknowledges there's enough money coming in until 2041," the lawmaker said.

Boehlert said the president now shies away from calling the Social Security issue a crisis.

"A crisis is in the eyes of the beholder," said the congressman, adding Bush was "not heavy-handed" in his pitch for their support.

"We got into a lot of other subjects, baseball and fly-fishing and politics, we covered the gamut, six guys sitting around the table, one hour up and one hour back," he said.

Boehlert declined to detail the political discussions.

### **Lawmakers: Army overlooked 37,600 acres for training at Fort Hood**

The Associated Press

May 24, 2005

The Army failed to account for 37,600 acres available for training at Fort Hood, Texas, when it recommended base closures and realignments, Texas lawmakers said Tuesday.

Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Waco, said he and Rep. John Carter, R-Round Rock, met with Pentagon officials who confirmed the land was not taken into account.

"The Army acknowledged to Congressman Carter and me they did not take into account the additional 37,600 acres that have recently opened up at Fort Hood. That's not a criticism of the Army, but it's an important fact," Edwards said.

The Pentagon has recommended removing nearly 8,500 troops from Fort Hood by 2011. It also recommended transferring a brigade and a headquarters division to Fort Carson, Colo., likely from the 4th Infantry Division. The Army had based its proposal, in part, on a finding that Fort Hood did not have enough training space.

Expansion of training space at Fort Hood had been restricted because surrounding land was habitat for two endangered bird species, the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. But that restriction was lifted after a determination that the species' habitat exists outside the military installation's boundaries.

"The availability of training acreage is a major consideration in the BRAC process and it is again troubling that important information like this was not considered in the initial proposal," said Carter.

Edwards, ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations military construction subcommittee, said he plans to present the information to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission and at a hearing by commission members in San Antonio on July 11.

The Pentagon has proposed closing or downsizing 62 major domestic military

facilities, a plan that it says could save \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

The plan includes closing Red River Depot and Lone Star Ammunition Plant near Texarkana, Brooks City Base in San Antonio and Naval Station Ingleside near Corpus Christi. Several other changes are recommended at Texas military installations, including adding thousands of troops to Fort Bliss in El Paso.

The Pentagon judged the military value of the country's numerous military bases and training capacity was the Army's top criterion for judging that value, Edwards said.

"This wasn't just any factor. It was an essential factor that was part of the DOD recommendation to BRAC," Edwards said.

Edwards said the congressmen also questioned the Army's finding that Fort Hood is short 60,000 square feet in education center space. He said that tally doesn't take into account a multimillion-dollar technology center recently finished and that Central Texas College has 30,000 square feet of classroom space on the post.

Fort Hood was in Edwards' district before the Legislature redrew district boundaries in 2003. It is now in Carter's district.

### Local News Articles

#### **Base Fight Hampered By Lack Of Data, Officials Say**

**Defense Dept., Navy Accused Of Withholding Information On Decision To Close Sub Base New London Day (New London, CT)**

By Robert A. Hamilton  
May 24, 2005

New London — Officials working to save the Naval Submarine Base in Groton have condemned the Navy and Department of Defense for withholding information on how the decision to close the base was reached.

Ten days after the Pentagon proposed closing the base to save \$1.5 billion over 20 years, the Navy has released only limited information, and that seems to indicate that there are problems with the Navy analysis of which bases to close, officials said.

About 50 pages of supporting material released to the state's congressional delegation on Friday showed that the Groton base ranked 14th of 29 nationally in terms of military value. But 12 bases ranked lower will be kept open.

Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island ranked eight places lower than Groton and has no active ships homeported there, but still survived the cut, noted John C. Markowicz, chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition, a grassroots group trying to save the Groton sub base.

"We have done some preliminary analysis that says this is a repeat of '93, but we need more data before we can prove that," Markowicz said.

In 1993 the coalition found so many flaws in a Navy recommendation to close the base in Groton that the Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, panel voted to keep it open.

Markowicz noted that the BRAC panel is at the same disadvantage as the save-the-base proponents.

"At some point, if this continues, I think the BRAC commission should convene a meeting, vote down the list, and go home," Markowicz said. "That's certainly an option."

U.S. Sens. Christopher J. Dodd and Joseph I. Lieberman, both D-Conn., and U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, dispatched a letter to Navy Secretary Gordon R. England on Monday requesting a large volume of material in addition to the 50 pages released last week.

"The first delivery of BRAC data from the Navy last week fell far short of what we need and deserve to make a fair case for saving the New London sub base," Lieberman said. "We are again asking for the Navy secretary to fully disclose so that we can make our defense."

Dodd agreed: "Sub Base New London is a critically important component of our national defense. It is vital that we have all of the relevant data related to this decision. I intend to work to ensure that no stone goes unturned when it comes to obtaining the data behind this decision."

Simmons said the information should have been provided when the closure list was released because of the tight timeline facing save-the-base proponents. The BRAC commissioners are scheduled to visit Groton June 1 and there will be a hearing July 6 in Boston.

"I question the fairness of a process when we are severely constrained by the schedule and we can't get the data," Simmons said.

He said the Pentagon has tried to justify the delay by claiming it has had to remove all classified information from the data, but he noted the Pentagon has been reviewing the information for two years and should have completed that task long ago.

"This process is supposed to be open, fair and transparent — how can you have transparency when there are security issues?" Simmons asked.

He also noted that during a hearing before the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, as the group is formally known, England and the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Vernon Clark, promised to provide affected communities access to the staff who made the decision.

"That's something we need to make note of, and be prepared to follow up on," Simmons said. "We need to talk to these people when we finally have the data in hand."

Markowicz said that with the commission visit scheduled for next week, there is barely enough time to review what the Pentagon said was millions of pieces of information that led to its decisions.

"We won't have enough time to understand it and determine if there were any issues with regard to how this decision was reached," Markowicz said. But he said he already sees one national security issue regarding the Pentagon recommendations.

Markowicz said the Pentagon would shut down the Groton base and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and pull all the planes out of Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine.

"You really want the United States Navy to pull completely out of New England?" Markowicz said. "That's what they're doing. ... The only thing they'll have left is a surface naval station in Newport that has no ships."

## **Politics Can Lead To Balancing Act In Base Closings**

**Members of Congress support closing installations - as long as their own districts aren't hurt.**

Newport News Daily Press (Newport News, VA)

David Lerman  
May 25, 2005

WASHINGTON -- When the Pentagon announced its recommendations for military base closures, Virginia Rep. J. Randy Forbes emerged a big winner.

As a result of base closures elsewhere, Fort Lee, near Petersburg, stands to gain more than 7,300 jobs - a major economic boost for the district Forbes represents.

"Our plan was well-strategized and well-implemented," Forbes said in a written statement taking credit for the expansion. "Today we reap the benefits."

But if the Chesapeake Republican had gotten his way, the growth at Fort Lee would never have been possible.

Forbes was an early, vocal opponent of the base closure initiative, which would close or

restructure more than 800 bases nationwide to save an estimated \$5.5 billion a year.

As early as 2001, Forbes helped lead an effort in the House to derail the base closure process by questioning its fairness, costs and timing.

"Until we can develop a fair process that yields what our military requires to maintain readiness and operate efficiently, we should not hastily embark upon another round of closures," Forbes wrote in an opinion piece for USA Today when Congress was first asked to authorize this year's closure round.

Today, with thousands of new local jobs on the line, Forbes says he would not vote to delay or cancel the closure initiative.

"We've come so far now, the best thing we could do is go ahead and wrap it up and get it behind us," Forbes said.

The delicate about-face illustrates the fine line many lawmakers must walk as they navigate the high-pressure politics of military base closures.

Virginia fared relatively well in the Pentagon's recommendations, suffering only a modest loss of jobs statewide while racking up huge gains in some regions, including South Hampton Roads. But the Peninsula would take a hit with the closure of Fort Monroe and the shedding of more than 2,100 jobs from Fort Eustis.

"The cuts Virginia received are painful for some communities," said Sen. John W. Warner, R-Va., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a steadfast supporter of the base-closure effort. "But overall, we did quite well."

Sen. George Allen, R-Va., has said he would work to try to save Fort Monroe. But like many of his colleagues, he would oppose any effort to delay the closure process, an aide said Tuesday.

For first-term Rep. Thelma Drake, R-Norfolk, the impact on her district - and perhaps her own political fortunes - is more complex. While Naval Station Norfolk would gain 2,800 jobs, the closure of Fort Monroe would eliminate

more than 3,500 jobs in Hampton, the northern part of her district.

But Drake said she has no qualms about letting the closure process go forward. "We've got to make sure the money we're spending on the military is money well spent," she said. "If there are ways we can consolidate and save money, we have an obligation to look at that."

If Fort Monroe is closed, Drake said, she does not expect to suffer political damage because of the independent nature of the base closing process. Pentagon recommendations must be reviewed by an independent commission. Congress could choose to reject the entire list, but it cannot make changes to it.

"I don't think you'll see people blaming an individual congressperson for a decision the military has made and which the law only gives us an up-or-down vote on," Drake said. "I think the public understands that we'll certainly do everything we can do for the best results for Fort Monroe, but it's not something within my power" to change.

The ability of lawmakers to distance themselves from unpopular decisions is precisely why Congress created an independent commission to assess military bases, said Paul Taibl, director for policy at Business Executives for National Security, a nonpartisan, nonprofit group that advocates closing bases.

"The whole reason the commission was set up was to give Congress some cover," Taibl said. "It gives the individual congressman a chance to act independently for his district, but then come together for the good of the nation."

Still, some lawmakers must wrestle with recommendations that could come as a double-edged sword.

Fighting to save Fort Monroe, for example, could mean a greater loss of jobs at Fort Eustis in Newport News, where some Army jobs now at Monroe would be transferred.

Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, D-Newport News, who represents parts of both Hampton and Newport News, could not be reached for comment Tuesday. But Scott has pledged that he will "specifically not give up on Fort Monroe."

Forbes, meanwhile, makes no apologies for changing his stance on base closures and fighting for new jobs in his district.

"This isn't a ballgame I wanted to play in," he said. "But I played by their rules, and we knocked a home run so far. It would be unfair to say now we should go through the process all over again."

### **Lackland Shift's Cost More Than Just Jobs**

San Antonio Express-News (San Antonio, TX)  
L.A. Lorek  
May 25, 2005

The loss of a military organization at Lackland AFB known as the Cryptologic Support Group is greater than just the number of jobs involved, local technology officials said. The recent report from the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, known as BRAC, recommended relocating the center to Tobyhanna Army Depot in Pennsylvania.

The move would cost 177 direct jobs and 199 indirect jobs, and those include many high-tech experts with advanced degrees. Workers with the Cryptologic Support Center repair and maintain computers, electronic components, radios and other equipment.

"Even though those jobs may be relatively small in comparison to other considerations, the intellectual capital of those jobs has a multiple effect," said Randy Goldsmith, president of the San Antonio Technology Accelerator Initiative, a public and private technology booster group.

The loss of the group would be a blow to San Antonio's growing intelligence community, which is home to the Air Intelligence Agency at Lackland and the new campus of the National Security Agency, Goldsmith said. The

Cryptologic Support Group works closely with the Air Intelligence Agency.

"We're going to have to do more analysis on what their rationale is," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, who heads San Antonio's military missions task force. "It's not huge, but it's a large enough number of people that if there's a counterargument, we want to make it."

In a global sense, San Antonio is "pretty happy" with the BRAC list, Jernigan said.

Overall, the report proposes 68 realignments at the city's four military bases, involving the loss of anywhere from 10 jobs to thousands at Wilford Hall Medical Center.

"We're going to have to pick our battles pretty carefully," he said.

A Lackland spokesman said no one was available to comment on the move Tuesday.

The report estimates relocating the center would cost the Defense Department \$10.2 million initially, but the military would save \$28 million by consolidating the operations during the next 20 years.

### **Rumsfeld's naval cutbacks start local war over future of Hueneme:**

#### **Port must fight for space at neighbouring**

Ventura base

Lloyd's List

Janet Porter

May 25, 2005

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has opened up a new battle front, but this time the war zone is the US west coast rather than the Middle East.

The Pentagon has drawn up a list of military installations that should be closed or scaled down. One of those earmarked for cutbacks is Naval Base Ventura County, some 60 miles up the coast from Los Angeles.

The base is adjacent to the Port of Hueneme which specialises in non-containerised cargo such as cars and refrigerated produce.

The commercial port is keen to take over three under-utilised wharves on the navy base in order to handle more of the overflow from Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The port authorities argue that the military would benefit from more modern port and infrastructure facilities that would still be at the disposal of the navy when required.

At the same time, Hueneme would have greater capacity to handle general cargo that is being squeezed out of the two San Pedro bay ports, as well as the space to develop some container handling facilities for coastal or feeder services.

However, local politicians reacted furiously when they heard about the development proposals, falsely accusing the port of lobbying to have the whole base mothballed, with the loss of around 17,000 jobs. In fact, the port has never called for the base to be closed down, only for a redesignation of some of the land that neighbours its berths.

Now Mr Rumsfeld has entered the fray with details of the Defense Department's Base Realignment and Closure Programme.

Naval Base Ventura County will be kept open, the Pentagon announced, but there will be a net loss of around 1,500 jobs. There was no mention of real estate and whether some of the land could be handed over to commercial use.

Local politicians and the navy command, who remain vehemently opposed to the use of surplus federal land for non-military purposes even if more jobs were created, have until September to lobby the Pentagon before the final list is presented to President Bush for his approval.

Port of Hueneme customers, including global operators such as Wallenius Wilhelmsen and LauritzenCool, fully back efforts to find extra cargo handling capacity in southern California, where ports are working at full stretch and the

big gateways are focused almost exclusively on containers.

So both sides are gearing up for a fight this summer between business and military interests, but with commerce yet to win the hearts and minds of local residents.

### **BRAC commissioner tours Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base**

The Associated Press (Spring Lake, NC)  
May 25, 2005

A member of the commission that will recommend which military posts should be closed or condensed toured Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base on Tuesday and said he was impressed with what he observed.

"I came away convinced ... that this is a facility of enormous importance to our national security," said retired Adm. Harold Gehman, one of nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which will make its recommendations to President Bush.

Commission members are visiting every installation the Defense Department said this month it wanted to close or realign. The information they collect will be used in their final report to the president, due Sept. 8, he said.

The Pentagon's proposal included moving more than 4,000 Air Force personnel from Pope and making the base home to 16 National Guard and Reserve air transport units providing air transportation for airborne soldiers at Fort Bragg.

The Army also would take over the Air Force base, allowing the U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command to relocate from Fort McPherson, Ga., a move that Gehman said would bring a four-star general to Fort Bragg.

Having a four-star general is "a big impact," Gehman said at a news conference at the Spring Lake Town Hall. "Four-star headquarters do a lot of business, bring a lot of visitors to an area."

## **Codey says state will analyze data used to target Fort Monmouth for closure**

The Associated Press (Trenton, NJ)

May 25, 2005

The state will analyze the data used by the Pentagon in its decision to close Fort Monmouth, acting Gov. Richard Codey said Tuesday.

"We have no intentions of taking this lying down," Codey said. "Now that the Pentagon has made its case, we will go through it point by point and show that closing Fort Monmouth is the wrong decision."

Paul Gaffney, chairman of the Governor's Commission to Support and Enhance New Jersey's Military and Coast Guard Installations, said state officials will show how Fort Monmouth's workforce is vital to the military by showcasing the important research and development work done at the post.

The commission, along with other groups, will pay for a \$200,000 study to review each point the Pentagon cited in its decision to close the fort. The review will be done by a group of military and industry analysts and is expected to take three months.

The study will also compare utility and health care costs and the school systems in the Fort Monmouth area with the area around Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. The Pentagon's plan would relocate the majority of Fort Monmouth's jobs to Aberdeen.

A visit to Aberdeen is planned, as well as trips to Ohio and Virginia, states that also would receive some of Fort Monmouth's jobs.

This is the third time Fort Monmouth has been targeted for closure by the Pentagon. Twice before, in 1988 and 1993, the members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that it be kept open.

## **New Meade jobs come with price tag**

The Capital (Annapolis, MD)

Katie Arcieri

May 24, 2005

Anne Arundel County must quickly plan road and school improvements with state and federal officials so it can absorb thousands of jobs the Pentagon wants moved to Fort George G. Meade, two of the county's congressmen said yesterday.

Meeting with 50 business owners and executives in Odenton, U.S. Reps. Ben Cardin and Dutch Ruppersberger said a key issue will be traffic but that an overall strategy is needed.

"We want to make sure we plan on what the growth is going to be so we can have places for these government contractors to work," said Mr. Cardin, D-Baltimore.

The Department of Defense Base Realignment Closure plan released earlier this month proposed shifting thousands of civilian jobs out of the Washington area to more suburban location, Fort Meade and Fort Belvoir, Va.

If approved by President Bush and Congress later this year, Fort Meade would add 2,915 civilian employees, 1,764 new contractors and 682 military personnel. Maryland would gain more than 9,000 jobs in the reshuffling, although 13 would be lost at Naval Station Annapolis.

"We think this is extremely good news," said Mr. Cardin, a candidate for the seat being vacated by U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes. "We need to continue to have a unified position in Maryland as it relates to these recommendations."

Mr. Ruppersberger, D-Baltimore County and a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said studies on traffic patterns must be conducted in relation to the impact of traffic congestion caused by the relocation of workers. The state's congressional delegation has been working with Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr.'s office to prepare for the BRAC report, and both

representatives last night called for that relationship to continue.

"We have to work as a team: federal, state and local," he said.

The BRAC proposal would relocate thousands of jobs from seven military agencies in Virginia, New Jersey and Florida to Fort Meade. With 110,000 jobs, Fort Meade already is home to the National Security Agency and is the county's largest employment center.

Although the state would gain jobs overall, a number of facilities would lose positions. A significant chunk of those jobs is at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in Bethesda, which would move to Fort Belvoir under the plan.

Mr. Cardin said state and federal officials from Maryland will be working to persuade the Pentagon that those jobs should be relocated to the Fort Meade area.

Business executives at the West County Library yesterday said it's too early to say exactly how the BRAC recommendations would affect the county because it's not clear how many civilians would relocate. Mr. Cardin and Mr. Ruppertsberger said while some of the new jobs will be filled by people transferring from other areas, many civilians in other states will not want to move, opening up slots to be filled locally.

"Normally, these are high-paying jobs," Mr. Ruppertsberger said.

### **BRAC Visitor to get Earful**

The Montgomery Advertiser (Montgomery, AL)  
William F. West  
May 25, 2005

Local business and military leaders will get their first chance to say why an Air Force technology service should remain at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base and continue to provide more than 3,200 jobs in the Montgomery area.

Retired Adm. Harold Gehman, a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, will inspect the post Thursday. His visit follows the May 13 Defense Department BRAC recommendations that Headquarters Operations and Sustainment Systems Group, known as OSSG, move from Gunter Annex to Hanscom Air Force Base near Boston.

Further details of Gehman's trip weren't available Tuesday from BRAC spokesman Robert McCreary.

Gehman and the other eight BRAC commissioners this week are traveling to bases slated for shifting or shutdowns.

The commission also has set a regional hearing for June 30 in Atlanta, where Alabamians will be able to speak in defense of OSSG staying in Montgomery. The time and place remain unnamed.

OSSG maintains Air Force computer systems and software worldwide. At stake is a more than \$750 million impact on the area economy.

Though Gehman will look at Maxwell-Gunter as a whole, local leaders will make the case to him to keep OSSG in Alabama's capital city.

"We're starting to formulate our thoughts," said Paul Hankins, the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce's consultant on military matters. "We'll have things that we have to say to him."

The BRAC commission has until Sept. 8 to give a realignment and closure list to President Bush. It'll be up to Bush and Congress to decide on an all-or-nothing roll.

"We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and not a lot of time to do it," BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi said in a statement.

The commissioners were appointed by the White House and Congress as part of a system that dates back to 1988 to keep politics away from military spending cuts.

Matthew Alexander, 29, a teacher at a writing lab at Alabama State University, said his heart goes out to those working at OSSG.

But aside from the BRAC process, Alexander said he already had anticipated Bush's 2004 re-election would mean budget reductions, given Bush's conservative economic stance.

"The money has to come from somewhere, and we have to either raise taxes or cut spending," Alexander said Tuesday.

Chamber of Commerce military experts talked Tuesday with base and OSSG leaders about exactly what they'll say to Gehman.

"It's a work in progress," said Bowen Ballard, a real estate executive and retired Air Force major general who serves on the chamber's Military Affairs Committee.

U.S. Rep. Terry Everett, R-Rehobeth, said in a statement that he has requested a Pentagon briefing along with the release of detailed information used to justify the recommended move of OSSG.

"The Defense Department is in the process of declassifying its supporting material before it can be released to Congress," Everett said.

### **Base supporters establish headquarters and hot lines**

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)

Ray Hackett

May 25, 2005

GROTON-- Organizers of a public effort to rally support to save the Groton submarine base announced the opening of a Save the Base Campaign headquarters and hot line Tuesday.

The headquarters will be in the auditorium of the Groton City Municipal Building just off the Clarence B. Sharp Highway.

The telephone hot line (446-4120) will provide recorded updates of the progress and

information on events being organized by the group.

The headquarters will have two additional phone lines citizens can call to volunteer with the effort. Those numbers are 446-0183 and 446-0145.

"This is obviously a very serious issue for us," said Tony Sheridan, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut.

The chamber and volunteers from the Mystic Chamber of Commerce will staff the headquarters. Groton Utilities, which provides services to the Groton sub base, is also contributing to the effort. The City of Groton is donating the space.

"We've got the space and it's available," Groton City Mayor Dennis Popp said. "It shows that we're working together as a community."

The announcement of the campaign headquarters was made at a morning meeting intended to mobilize citizens and businesses throughout the region to join the public effort to turn back the Pentagon recommendation to close the Groton base.

The first event the group is planning is a rally along Route 12 next Wednesday when members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission tour the Groton facility. Organizers hope to rally as many as 5,000 people.

"I think it will be pretty neat," Popp said. "I think we need to send a message to the commission, and that's the right message to send. We support our base."

### **Consultant tells city, county to seek federal help to deal with realignment**

Grand Forks Herald (Grand Forks, ND)

Stephen J. Lee

May 25, 2005

Local governments now should start to plan for whatever happens with Grand Forks Air Force Base, said the Washington consultant paid by

the city of Grand Forks to help keep the base open.

The apparent redundancy didn't seem out of place at the quickly called joint meeting of the seven-member Grand Forks City Council and the five-member Grand Forks County Commission in City Hall Tuesday to hear from George Schlossberg.

On the advice of the Washington consultant, both bodies agreed to work together to figure out the best way to respond to the Pentagon's plans for the Grand Forks base.

Schlossberg has worked with the city of Grand Forks' base retention efforts for several years.

He explained to the elected officials that the Pentagon's plans for the base, termed realignment, is "a peculiar form of art," used by the Department of Defense that could mean either losing jobs and mission or gaining jobs and missions at the base.

It's not as clearly defined, in general, as either closing a base or leaving it status quo and in Grand Forks base's case, "the recommended suggestion is not as well defined as some other realignments," Schlossberg said.

The Pentagon said May 13 that the base's current mission of about 50 KC-135 air refueling tankers will be transferred, along with an estimated 2,290 military personnel - 80 percent of the current levels - and 355 civilian jobs. With a loss of an additional 2,300 jobs in the region indirectly connected to the base, that means a loss of about 5,000 jobs, the Pentagon figures.

A new mission, perhaps involving UAVs, or unmanned aerial vehicles, will be assigned to the base, but details so far are slim. A nine-member Base Realignment and Closure panel is reviewing the Pentagon's list of 29 bases to be closed and 33 other major bases to be downsized by realignment in the next few years, with a goal of saving \$49 billion over 20 years.

There is federal help to bases that lose land and/or jobs, even if the bases aren't closed entirely, Schlossberg said, and federal grants have averaged about \$1 million to communities hit by job losses from base closings in the previous four BRAC rounds.

But first the Pentagon, through its Office of Economic Adjustment, needs to see a Local Redevelopment Authority organized to handle the local response to a base closing or realignment, Schlossberg said. It could be the city, county or some joint entity formed to deal with the Pentagon's programs.

Some LRAs involve a dozen or more local governments, he said. Although an LRA really can't be selected by the Pentagon until the BRAC process is final in the fall, it's not too early to start planning it, Schlossberg said. "It's the single voice the Pentagon will look to in a community."

Some Pentagon OEA grants - to help communities that think their base might be closed to study ways to diversify - actually were available up to the day the Pentagon's closure and realignment list was released, May 13, Schlossberg said.

Two more rounds of grants, one open now and one open in the fall after the BRAC process is finalized, are available, he said.

Grants available

In Washington on Tuesday, the Labor Department said it will provide up to \$1 million in planning funds for communities that lose civilian jobs due to military base closings, The Associated Press reported. The grants would be for training displaced workers, hiring consultants and planning economic development.

In a letter to state agencies, a Labor Department official said the grants should be awarded by June 30 and "only communities that would be affected by the Pentagon's recommended list are eligible," for the grants

Although the status of realigned bases is less clear, the grants also would be available to bases being realigned, if there are civilian job losses, Schlossberg told County Commissioner Connie Triplett.

But the main thing is setting up an LRA, he said. "Who would the applicant for the grant be," he asked. "Setting up the LRA is the first step."

To do that, there is a grant, too, of up to \$175,000 from the Pentagon's OEA to help a community set up an LRA, Schlossberg said.

Gary Malm, a member of the County Commission, said he was concerned that the many smaller communities surrounding the base, such as Larimore and Northwood, N.D., will be affected by the base's realignment but "have no political voice," in the base realignment and closing (BRAC) process.

Schlossberg said the LRA can be organized to include any number of local government entities.

Also Tuesday, North Dakota's three-man congressional delegation released a call for the Pentagon to make public the information used to decide why the Grand Forks base is slated for realignment. In a news release, the lawmakers said they want to see the Pentagon's analyses of all criteria used to judge the base's value and more details on exactly what the Pentagon's plans are for the base.

### **Maine, NH still seek info from Pentagon on shipyard**

The Associated Press (NH)  
May 25, 2005

Maine and New Hampshire senators received some data yesterday used by the Pentagon to support its recommendation to close the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and to remove aircraft and slash personnel at Brunswick Naval Air Station.

But the data was incomplete and Maine Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe said the Pentagon's failure to provide all of the requested

data was "tantamount to a new level of foot dragging" by the defense department.

The data that arrived yesterday contained the Pentagon's conclusions, but it did not contain the actual numbers that were crunched to arrive at specific recommendations for the Maine bases, said Preston Hartman, a spokesman for Snowe.

"Without the full information and back up documentation from the Pentagon, we cannot analyze and assess what led to the Pentagon's recommendations on Maine's military facilities in this base closing round," the senators said in a statement.

Pentagon officials promised to provide the supporting documents to the nine-member Base Realignment and Closure Commission by Friday, but the documents didn't arrive.

Maine and New Hampshire officials say the lack of data has delayed preparation of arguments to refute the Pentagon proposal to close or realign bases.

"Every day that goes by is a day less that the congressional delegation and the affected communities can effectively challenge their assumptions and conclusions," Snowe and Collins said.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has proposed closing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on the Maine-New Hampshire border and moving half of the active-duty military staff of Maine's Brunswick Naval Air Station to Florida. He also proposed closing a Defense Finance Accounting Service facility in Limestone, Maine.

U.S. Rep. Michael Michaud, whose Maine district includes the DFAS center, the proposal was particularly unfair to the people of northern Maine who already suffered from the closing of Loring Air Force Base in the early 1990s.

The current proposal "puts communities like Limestone in double jeopardy — facing a second closure at the hands of the Defense Department," said Michaud.

Maine and New Hampshire lawmakers plan to meet Friday with Anthony Principi, chairman of the commission that's reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations.

Principi has said the commission won't rubber-stamp the closure list, so bases could be added or removed. While a commission majority can remove a base from the list, it takes seven members to add a base.

At least two commissioners are scheduled to tour Portsmouth and Brunswick on June 2 and 3, and a regional hearing on the recommendations is scheduled for July 6 in Boston.

### **Missouri delegation seeks data supporting fighter wing's closure**

Ft. Worth Star Telegram (Ft. Worth, TX)

Sam Hananal

May 24, 2005

WASHINGTON - Missouri's congressional delegation is urging the Pentagon to release all data it considered in deciding to close the Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Fighter Wing in St. Louis, saying they can't fight the decision without knowing all the facts.

The request came after lawmakers from Missouri and Illinois attended a classified briefing where Air National Guard officials explained how moving the fighter wing could jeopardize homeland security in the Midwest.

"This leaves the center part of the United States without effective air cover for the homeland security mission Operation Noble Eagle," Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., said at a late afternoon news conference at the Capitol. He was joined by fellow Sen. Jim Talent, R-Mo., and most of the state's House members.

Bond and other members of the delegation want to reverse the Pentagon's recommendation to close the fighter wing, a move that would cost about 250 military and civilian jobs and \$135 million in economic benefits to the region.

Bond and Talent also said they would consider supporting legislation that would delay the entire base closure process if there is not enough time to present their case to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, which is considering the Pentagon's recommendations.

Contending the move to close the 131st Fighter Wing makes the region more vulnerable to an attack, the lawmakers sent a letter Tuesday to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asking for "installation-specific data" that was the basis for the Defense Department's decision.

"We urge you to release this data immediately to avoid undermining the BRAC process," the letter to Rumsfeld said.

The delegation also sent a letter to Anthony Principi, chairman of the nine-member commission, urging the BRAC to hear the same classified briefing on the 131st Fighter Wing before it convenes a regional hearing in St. Louis on June 7. That hearing is the main forum for challenging the closures.

"It's very important that we present facts and push them hard at this hearing," Talent said.

Missouri stands to lose nearly 3,700 jobs in the base closure and consolidation process, but lawmakers have focused most of their efforts so far on saving the 131st Fighter Wing. In all, the Pentagon's plan would close 33 major facilities in 22 states and reconfigure hundreds of others to achieve savings and promote cooperation among the armed services.

Commission members were in Kansas City on Tuesday visiting the city's Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which the Pentagon has recommended for closure. On Wednesday, commissioners will tour the DFAS facility in St. Louis and the Army Human Resources Command in Overland. Commissioners are expected to tour the 131st Fighter Wing within the next two weeks.

Lt. Cmdr. Joe Carpenter, a Pentagon spokesman, said he could not comment on the request from the Missouri delegation.

May 24, 2005

"We've made a concerted effort to make available unclassified information and that is posted on our Web site," Carpenter said.

Bond also said the delegation would oppose moving the Army Human Resources Command out of the St. Louis suburb of Overland, a move that would cost more than 2,000 jobs in the region.

Bond said Gov. Matt Blunt and state agencies are putting together a team of experts to help make the case against closure. Unlike other states, such as Kansas and Illinois, Missouri officials did not hire lobbyists to help protect military installations before the Pentagon announced its planned cuts.

The commission can remove a facility from the list only if it finds that the Pentagon deviated from the criteria used to decide which facilities are to be closed or aligned. Removing an installation from the list requires a simple majority vote of the commission.

In past years, about 85 percent of installations have remained on the list.

Illinois Reps. John Shimkus, R-Ill., and Jerry Costello, D-Ill., also attended the classified briefing Tuesday, saying they support Missouri's efforts to keep the 131st in St. Louis.

"We've pledged to work diligently with the Missouri delegation 100 percent to be partners in this because it's very important to the St. Louis metropolitan areas," Shimkus said.

The commission must send its report to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president will review the report and order revisions if needed. Congress then has to accept or reject the report in its entirety. The closures and consolidations would occur over five years starting in 2006.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

#### **Voice of the People**

The Chicago Tribune (Chicago, IL)  
Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-IL)

Your editorial criticizing the governor and Illinois lawmakers for working to prevent realignment of Illinois military installations, specifically the Air National Guard 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, misses some critical points ("Defense as a jobs program," Editorial, May 16).

Everyone understands the need for our military to be more efficient and equipped to respond to threats at home and abroad.

But moving the 183rd's F-16s to Indiana--clipping the wings of the Air National Guard in Springfield--will not bring America closer to those goals.

Violating its own stated criteria, the Defense Department recommends moving aircraft from Illinois to an installation with a lower military value. Military value, based on current and future mission requirements and operational readiness of our total military force, is the stated central factor in Base Realignment and Closure decisions.

The justification given for moving the aircraft--the strong recruitment potential of the Ft. Wayne area--is factually wrong. Air National Guard recruiting in the Springfield area has been strong and the base is operating at 100 percent for aircrews and nearly 98 percent overall strength.

I agree that protecting America is the first and most important standard to follow in these decisions. I believe that a strong case can be made that the proposed realignment does not meet that standard.

Jobs and economic impact are also an important part of the story, and I will work with the communities affected by the announced realignments to help make their strongest case to the BRAC commissioners. In the case of Springfield, some serious errors appear to have been committed by the Pentagon. Together with Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan, I intend to bring these errors to the attention of the BRAC Commission.

## **Sub Base: Numbers are Just Part of the Story**

The Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT))

Helen Ubinas

May 24, 2005

Obviously I would be of no use in the fight to save the Groton sub base. Think strategy, our political cavalry tells us. Think economics.

Numbers, folks, it's got to be about numbers. The day we learned Groton made the infamous list, U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, warned: "This fight won't be won on emotions."

And just Monday, former 2nd District Congressman Sam Gejdenson was quoted in The Courant with this advice: "It's essential that you just don't come in and say this hurts my community."

Of course, they're right. The folks on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission don't strike me as the warm and fuzzy types. Anne Davis, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy, was about as emotional as a court clerk repeating testimony when she delivered the numeric hatchet that justified Groton's closing.

But all I have are emotional reasons for wanting the base to stay in Groton: I don't want my little sister and her family to move.

My sister Jessica and my brother-in-law, a career Navy man, just bought their first house in Salem. They've started putting their own touches to it: new windows, a master bedroom downstairs. She just planted a whole load of perennials; this weekend my brother-in-law plans to hang a tire swing for the girls.

It was bad enough that a seven-year age gap meant that while Jessie was growing up, I was growing out -- to college, jobs, a life of my own. Bad enough that with our schedules today, we already don't see enough of one another, and she only lives half an hour away.

Now that we have a second chance at getting to know each other, I'm not ready to give it up.

I want to spend more time with her -- down a few zillion cups of coffee while we talk about our lives. I want to see my nieces grow up, maybe go to a few more Dora the Explorer birthday parties for 4-year-old Jalen, another dance recital for 6-year-old Kirsten. The last one we went to was a five-hour marathon -- at least it felt like it -- but when she took the stage, I forgot how long we had been sitting in those uncomfortable chairs. She's a natural born star, that one.

Already they've moved around: a year in Maine, a summer in Georgia. And I know that's nothing compared to other folks, especially in the armed forces, but it's just nice having them around.

Military families are supposed to suck things like this up; nobody knows that better than Kathleen O'Beirne, an Army brat whose husband, retired Navy Capt. Frank O'Beirne Jr. used plenty of numbers to help save the base from closing in 1993. Monday, he told me he's going to give it his best shot this time around too.

But even she said one of the happiest times for her family was when her husband was stationed in Washington for eight years, close to his parents and, for a while, close to his sister and her submarine husband.

"It was great for the kids to have cousins to grow up with," she said.

In Old Lyme, Deirdre Christman's 26-year-old son doesn't have any kids yet; he's planning a wedding next summer. But she's still getting a kick out of having him around, even if he brings his laundry when he visits. As soon as he graduated from the Naval Academy, he was off to schools in South Carolina, Georgia and New York. About a year ago, he was stationed in Groton.

Christman and the rest of the family are pretty philosophical about the possible closure; which is a lot more than my family can claim.

Depending on whom you talk to, we're either resolute or in pre-meltdown stage.

"It's disappointing," Deirdre Christman said, "but when you consider that there are families whose loved ones are in Iraq, it's hard to get too upset about a possible move to Georgia or Virginia."

Though, she conceded, she might feel a little less philosophical if there were grandbabies involved.

But then, none of this sappy family stuff means anything to BRAC.

Numbers, remember, they want numbers.

So, I have a number for them. How's eight? Eight aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents who don't want to see their loved ones go, who represent just one of the families behind all those bigger numbers.

### **Complaints about closures are off base**

The Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, MD)

Steve Champman

May 25, 2005

CHICAGO - It's officially called the Department of Defense, but to many politicians, the label misstates its function. Judging from their reaction to proposed base closures, they'd like to rename it the Department of Jobs, Pork, Community Uplift and Incumbent Protection. That way, no one would get distracted by the petty business of protecting America. Recently, the Pentagon released a list of proposed realignments in U.S. military facilities. The plan calls for shutting 33 major installations and shrinking 29 others, which would streamline operations and save nearly \$50 billion over 20 years.

But elected officials representing areas that would be adversely affected showed little interest in whether the changes would reduce costs, improve operations or cure cancer. They preferred to focus on the overriding issue: Their

states or districts would lose federal jobs and dollars that they assumed to be a birthright.

From Capitol Hill came piteous lamentations and promises to resist. Sen. Thomas R. Carper, a Delaware Democrat, said he and others in the state's congressional delegation would "push every single button we can to get the right decision." Sen. Susan M. Collins, a Maine Republican, accused the Pentagon of deciding "to dramatically neglect the Northeastern United States." Democratic Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut said the proposed closure of a submarine base in his state "is cruel and unusual punishment that Connecticut does not deserve and our national security cannot afford."

But if Connecticut doesn't deserve it, two questions arise: 1) What state does? and 2) Who cares? This is not a task on the order of cutting a birthday cake for 6-year-olds, where fairness demands that everyone gets an equal share. Fairness should be irrelevant when it comes to national defense.

Suspicious arose that politics, not security, may have determined which states get the shaft. But if the administration is trying to reward its friends and punish its enemies, it's going about it in a strange way. True, Texas would gain jobs in the realignment - but not as many as Maryland, a true-blue state with two Democratic senators (although a Republican governor). Massachusetts also came out ahead.

Alaska, which is more consistently Republican than the Bush family, would lose more than 4,600 jobs. Red states such as Mississippi, Kentucky and North Carolina are among those slated for sizable job cuts.

The apparent subordination of political concerns doesn't mean all the changes are sound. But it at least means the people drafting the list were asking the right questions.

It would have been refreshing to hear one member of Congress say his or her constituents would stoically accept these sacrifices in the interest of national security. Instead, 11 senators are co-sponsoring a bill to delay the closures.

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, national security is what the base-closing process is about. Contrary to the prevailing impression on Capitol Hill, the only criterion is whether the changes will make us safer while economizing tax dollars.

If the plan achieves that goal, it will be an excellent thing for all Americans - something most of them probably know, despite what their elected representatives say. Even in the dramatically neglected Northeastern United States, I suspect, staying alive is the highest priority.

**Additional Notes**