

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

June 6, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Lessons Lie In Old Base Closures

Opposition to Base Closings Delaying
Defense Authorization Bill in Senate

Survivors Outline Life After BRAC

Base Closings Spawn an Industry

Air Force looks to strip planes from the
Guard

Local News Articles

Mississippi officials say they will fight for
Keesler hospital (Biloxi, MS)

Closing the submarine base in Groton won't
just torpedo the economy in eastern
Connecticut (Bridgeport, CT)

NASA Langley Could Lose Researchers to
BRAC (Newport News, VA)

\$131M Hanscom expansion planned
(Lowell, MA)

State Is Facing Other Job Losses From
Military's Decisions (New York)

BRAC details are still AWOL (Norwich,
CT)

Fort Monroe's chances slim, experts say
(Newport News, VA)

DoD backs up decision with partial
disclosure (Dover, NH)

Guard study rejected for fear of base
closings (Rutland, VT)

Opinions/Editorials

Save 130th: Keep 'em flying (Charleston, WV)

Fort Meade growth brings opportunities,
problems for area (Annapolis, MD)

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Lessons Lie In Old Base Closures

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Christopher Quinn

June 6, 2005

Denver -- Lowry Air Force Base and Fitzsimons
Army Medical Center were guinea pigs for
Denver and Aurora, Colo.

Everyone else facing the closure of a military base, including Georgia, will benefit from the cities' experiments.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission dealt Denver and Aurora successive punches, targeting Lowry for shutdown in 1991 and Fitzsimons in 1996. About 11,000 jobs were lost, along with hundreds of millions of dollars in local spending.

The local governments, like others across the country, scrambled to bring the former bases back to life. They pursued development and spending programs, lobbied for changes in laws and worked through the tangle of environmental and governmental regulations.

It took a decade, but it worked. Now a new round of base closings has dozens of communities trying to learn from the experiences of places like these.

More than 750 people, including some from Georgia, are in Denver at the National Association of Installation Developers conference to learn or teach others how to deal with the coming changes of base closures or realignment.

Former Gov. and U.S. Sen. Zell Miller, who helped steer Georgia through the threat of base closures while in office, is scheduled to address the gathering today. Four of the state's military installations are targeted for closure: Fort McPherson in Atlanta; Fort Gillem in Forest Park; Naval Air Station Atlanta in Marietta; and the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens.

Ten years ago, few people would have shown up for such a conference just three weeks after seeing their local bases on the list for possible closure. They would be too busy working the political system to try to get their bases removed from the list, said retired Brig. Gen. Phil Browning.

Browning is guiding Georgia's fight against base closures as head of the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee.

Today, representatives of at-risk communities are working both angles, trying to get their bases removed from the list but preparing for the worst.

"It's the most people we've ever had at a [National Association of Installation Developers] conference," Browning said.

They are learning how those first tough transitions from military to civilian control helped get new federal laws and procedures written to smooth the process. They are talking to planners and developers who have gained valuable experience and insights into how the process works and how to work the process.

Finally, the success stories of base redevelopment like Lowry, now home to 3,000 new houses, 10 schools, 100 businesses and more than 20,000 workers and residents, have eased some of the panic that used to greet a visit from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

"So much of the fear was fear of the unknown," said Kay Miller with the Development Services Department of Aurora.

Miller is helping with the redevelopment of Fitzsimons. Denver, Aurora and the University of Colorado are well on their way to turning the base into a medical and science research center with a complex of new hospitals and a growing cluster of high-tech companies.

A new \$57 million urban community with housing, retail and commercial spaces will open in the former base in 2006.

People were unsure of what would happen in the 1990s. They feared seeing shuttered, weed-choked bases or were afraid that new development would be poorly done, dragging down local property values, Kay Miller said.

Now that dozens of communities have survived closings successfully, the unknown has been dismissed, she said.

But that is not to say it's going to be easy, conference speakers warned. There will be environmental challenges in dealing with toxic materials handled on the bases and the political challenges of getting local governments to work with a single vision. There will be long, frustrating delays as locals work through the complex process of taking land back from the federal government or taking over sewers and roads or buildings not constructed to local codes.

And it won't be cheap, though successful base redevelopments do pay off in the long run.

"Most have a negative cash flow for five or six years," said Jimmy Hicks, executive vice president for RKG Associates of New Hampshire, a consulting firm.

Tom Markham, the executive director of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority, said: "There is life after base closure. But it's really hard."

BRAC commissioners released the latest list of more than 150 installations targeted for closure in May.

The commission will finalize its list by September and turn it over to Congress, which will pass it on to President Bush. He must accept or reject the list in whole; he can't change it.

In four previous rounds of closings dating to 1988, Georgia has not lost a base.

Opposition to Base Closings Delaying Defense Authorization Bill in Senate

CQ Today

John M. Donnelly

June 6, 2005

The potential for a contentious debate over base closings has forced Senate leaders to reconsider bringing the fiscal 2006 defense authorization bill to the floor this week.

The prospect of a battle over proposals to postpone the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and other controversies has put the \$441.6 billion measure (S 1042 — S Rept

109-69) on hold. The bill was approved by the Armed Services Committee on May 12 and was slated for floor action after the Memorial Day recess. The House passed its version (HR 1815 — H Rept 109-89) on May 25.

"There is no profit in putting a bill on the floor which invites Republican-on-Republican violence," said a Senate aide familiar with the internal debate. "With a little hard work using the rule book, BRAC opponents could tie up Chairman [Virginia Republican John W.] Warner's bill for a few weeks, which is time the Senate just doesn't have right now."

The aide cited a variety of other issues — interrogation policies at Guantanamo Bay, the imminent release of more documents about the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and veterans' health care funding, among others — "that all are pressures against sending the bill sailing out to the Senate floor absent any course for how it reaches port."

The Pentagon has recommended closing 33 major facilities and realigning 29 others as part of the first round of base closings in a decade. It also recommended closing or realigning hundreds of smaller bases. An independent BRAC commission has until Sept. 8 to review the list and send its own recommendations to the president.

The decisions affect thousands of jobs across the country, and lawmakers from states targeted for major closures are pulling out all stops to thwart the process.

Bids to Delay BRAC

Several proposals to delay the BRAC process will probably be offered as amendments to the defense authorization bill, aides said.

At the center of the controversy is freshman Republican John Thune of South Dakota, who defeated Minority Leader Tom Daschle (1987-2005) last November. Thune promised voters that his GOP connections could save Ellsworth Air Force Base. But the Pentagon hit list targets Ellsworth and its more than 3,700 jobs.

Since then, Thune and other senators from states facing losses — including Maine, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Mississippi, New Jersey and New Mexico — have campaigned tirelessly to fight the process. Thune has sponsored three bills, and all are being considered as amendments to the defense authorization measure, said spokesman Alex Conant.

One bill would require the Pentagon to turn over all data undergirding its BRAC recommendations to Congress within seven days of the law's enactment — or the process would be canceled.

A second would put the BRAC round on hold until several conditions were met, including return of most forces from Iraq; the completion of a Pentagon analysis of an Overseas Basing Commission report critical of the administration's rebasing plans abroad; and submission to Congress of the Pentagon's sweeping study of its forces and resources, the Quadrennial Defense Review.

A third measure would protect uniformed military personnel who testified before Congress about BRAC from retribution by superiors.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee appears poised to subpoena the same Pentagon records that Thune and company are seeking. The information was supposed to be sent to Congress, the Government Accountability Office and the BRAC commission by May 20. The Pentagon made a classified database of BRAC materials available to cleared lawmakers and aides on May 31 and said a declassified version would be available June 4.

Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, and the top-ranking Democrat on the committee, Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, say the classified database is not responsive to their requests for e-mails and other BRAC-related records.

Survivors Outline Life After BRAC

Planning, grants and gumption are keys to redeveloping bases, say speakers at conference

New London Day
Anthony Cronin
June 5, 2005

Denver — At the 2005 annual conference of the Association of Defense Communities, meeting here this weekend, Hilarie Portell told people from communities where base closings loom that they need to gather strength when faced with a closing.

Portell's community had been home to the Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado, closed in 1994 by the Pentagon.

“Most real estate developments don't start out with 1,000 vacant buildings, 28 miles of obsolete streets and utilities, three runways and a 12-mile-long chain link fence,” said Portell, who directs marketing for the Lowry Redevelopment Authority. “Not to mention environmental issues.”

But today, the Lowry Redevelopment Authority can point to a nearly 80 percent transformation of the base into a community of 20,000 who live or work there or go to its schools.

“Military base redevelopment is long-term, expensive and complicated,” she said. “The only constant is change. You will have to react to community concerns, market realities, political pressure and media scrutiny – again and again,” Portell said.

Portell was one of several featured speakers during daylong presentations about the base-shutdown process at the annual conference of the NAID/ADC, formerly known as the National Association of Installation Developers and now called the Association of Defense Communities.

The NAID/ADC is a Washington, D.C.-based trade group that aids communities that have lost bases or are scheduled to lose a base, such as the Pentagon's recommended shutdown of the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, now in the hands of

the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, or BRAC.

The audience listening to Portell in the packed room came from places like Kittery, Maine, and Grand Forks, N.D. When David MacKinnon, associate director of the federal Office of Economic Adjustment, asked those present to raise their hands if they hailed from a community slated to lose a military base, nearly every hand slowly rose. Many looked around and quietly shook their heads in disbelief.

MacKinnon, whose federal Department of Defense group is the lead agency that handles communities impacted by a base closing, said his organization recognizes that a base shutdown is traumatic, affecting members of the military, their families and their communities.

But he said his agency could offer financial assistance, planning and other services to help lessen the shock that will accompany the loss of a base.

“Most of you hope you won't see much of me,” MacKinnon said. “But the reality is that you probably will see someone from our office,” if their community remains on the base-closing list.

He offered some solace, saying more than 20 federal agencies can offer assistance — including financial, social, and small-business aid — to those communities struck by the Pentagon's cost-cutting decisions. “There are an array of federal programs, and we can bring those to your communities, depending on what your needs are,” he said.

The Office of Economic Adjustment was created in 1961 and has assisted more than 400 communities affected by the Department of Defense moves to relocate or downsize military facilities.

The agency offers advance planning and seed grants to help communities get started with redevelopment of a shuttered military site. “We can help you stabilize your economy and create new opportunities,” he said.

He said the primary local organization that plays a key role in the transformation of a military base is its Local Redevelopment Authority. LRA's — like the Lowry Redevelopment Authority that Portell represents — are created after a base is marked for closing and becomes the local overseer for the transition from military dependence to non-military uses.

Such assistance would be needed if the Groton submarine base isn't able to convince the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission that the base serves a vital, and strategic, military need. The nine-member panel cannot reverse the Pentagon's decisions on base closings based on economic need but can act if it feels a base proposed for shutdown is vital to the nation's national security.

For those who must now prepare for the closing of bases in their communities, Portell offered several important lessons:

*The re-use plan for a military base must be sellable. “What communities want and what the market wants are very different,” she said.

*Build public trust for the redevelopment plan. Without it, the project won't have the necessary support to effectively move from the planning stage to implementation and, ultimately, success.

*Be prepared for crisis. “Base redevelopments are complex, high visibility projects involving many competing interests,” she said. “Controversy will happen.”

*Pay attention to public perception, because perception becomes the reality. “Most people,” Portell said, “have no direct experience with a military base — and mystery leads to suspicion. Unless you communicate otherwise, it may be assumed that your site is secretive, contaminated and bureaucratic — all red flags for the development community.”

Base Closings Spawn An Industry

From communities on the dreaded list come officials seeking guidance on redevelopment

New London Day

Anthony Cronin

June 5, 2005

Denver — The business of base closings is big business.

Inside the cavernous exhibit hall of the Colorado Convention Center, row upon row of exhibit booths offer assistance this weekend to the nearly 1,000 who came to the Mile High City to learn about the federal base closing and consolidation process.

Business consultants, environmental experts, property management firms, leasing experts, even public relations firms are staffing booths. All have expertise in the base closing business, which has grown up since 1988.

And now as hundreds of communities prepare for the latest, 2005 round of closings and consolidations, ample advice is available from those who have mastered the art of transforming a former military base into apartment complexes, shopping plazas or gleaming medical centers.

The federal government has been in the business of closings and consolidations for nearly two decades. There have been five rounds of formal nationwide base closings: 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2005. The Naval Submarine Base in Groton, which successfully fought back closing attempts in 1993, is again on the Pentagon's list of proposed closings, which would send economic shock waves throughout Connecticut.

Groton isn't alone. Communities across the country are facing the elimination of a base or the consolidation of services. That's why officials from local municipalities, counties and states that will be affected have come to Denver for the 2005 annual conference of the NAID/ADC, a Washington-based group that calls itself "The Voice of America's Defense Communities." The Association of Defense Communities, as it's now known, has been around for nearly 30 years, getting its start in

1976 when a group of airport managers at former military bases gathered to exchange ideas, desperate for help.

This weekend, by contrast, plenty of help is available. Some base-closing experts offer catchy slogans like "We've Got the Bases Covered" (a law firm) or "Navigating the BRAC Course" (from a specialist in base re-uses). And there is no shortage of experts. The speakers guide for the conference, including their biographies, runs 47 pages. The attendee list covers 44 pages, using both sides.

While the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission ponders the fate of communities like Groton slated for a base shutdown, the Association of Defense Communities and similar groups want to spread the word that other communities have been through this and survived, although they concede recovery and reclamation can be a years-long process.

Joseph Merluzzo, a professional engineer with the Rocky Hill-based HNTB Corp., is manning a booth during the four-day conference. His Connecticut firm offers architectural, engineering and planning services.

He said his company has worked with the Department of Defense and other federal agencies in addition to its engineering-related work around Connecticut, which includes design work for a planned new Amtrak Bridge across the Thames River.

"The base closure and realignment is a focus of ours," Merluzzo said. "I'm here to learn what I can about the process," he said.

Merluzzo said that if the Groton base were to close it would have a big impact on the region and state.

"If Groton were the epicenter, you wonder just how far the ripple effect would go," he said. And if the Pentagon's decision to close the 687-acre base ultimately prevails, the Groton site would have some advantages that other bases around the country don't have. It features a waterfront

location along its lower base and a campus-like setting within its upper base area. It's also located within an urban-suburban area.

Speakers at this weekend's conference have said the current round of base closures tends to affect military facilities in more rural areas, where redevelopment efforts could be far more difficult than in population centers.

State and regional officials have speculated that should the Groton base close, it would affect more than 14,000 jobs, pull more than \$450 million from its annual payroll out of the region's economy and create a billion dollar-plus impact on the state's overall economy.

Hector Nieves, an official from the city of Ceiba, Puerto Rico, knows first-hand what a base shutdown can do to a community. Nieves, sitting amid the brightly colored convention booths, said his community suffered a severe economic blow when the U.S. Navy removed its naval station at Roosevelt Roads. He said the Navy finally took out its last materials from the once-booming base several years ago and his community hasn't been the same since. He said the base was a major employer for his city of some 20,000 and said some of those who worked there were single mothers who are the heads of their households.

Nieves said the city is now going through the process of transferring land from the federal government to local control. "I don't know what's going to happen," he said, adding that he hopes some of the speakers at the Denver conference will provide him with more insight to help his beleaguered municipality.

**Air Force looks to strip planes from the Guard;
Guard officials say they will be stretched too thin; plan backers cite need to streamline**

The Houston Chronicle (Houston, TX)

Eric Rosenberg

June 5, 2005

WASHINGTON - In a major redesign of the Air Force, the service wants to strip aircraft from

one-third of its Air National Guard units and either retire the planes outright or ship them to other bases around the country.

All told, 166 aircraft in 28 of 88 Air National Guard units would be removed under the plan, which was included as part of the Pentagon's recent base-closure recommendations.

This tally includes 35 C-130 airlift transports, 26 KC-135 aerial tankers and 105 F-16 fighters.

The plan includes retiring the 17 F-16s stationed at Houston's Ellington Field, a move local officials have vowed to fight.

Under the plan, an as-yet-undefined number of units might gain other roles, such as operating unmanned aircraft or other piloted aircraft.

The Guard provides nearly half of the Air Force's tactical airlift, combat communications, aeromedical evacuation and refueling duties.

With its force of jet fighters, the Guard has total responsibility for air defense of U.S. skies.

Many duties right now

Guard supporters claim such a move would be a devastating blow at a time when the service is shouldering a heavy burden in Iraq, Afghanistan and the air defense of the continental United States.

Guard officials also worry that the service would lose pilots, crews and maintenance technicians if the cuts are accepted by the nine-member independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

The BRAC panel is conducting hearings across the nation about the Pentagon's recommendations.

The Air National Guard - like the Army National Guard - has two roles: Units are under the command of state governors during peacetime, but the president may call the units to active duty during war.

Retired Air Force Gen. Stephen Koper, president of the National Guard Association of the United States, called the Air Force proposals "a fiasco."

The organization represents 45,000 Air and Army National Guard officers.

"This isn't right, and it is not the right way to go," Koper said in an interview, adding that the 28 units "will be essentially put out of business."

'Shocking' proposals

Air Force Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke, president of the Adjutants General Association, which represents Army and Air National Guard leaders in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories, called the proposals "shocking."

While the Air Force proposes stripping the Guard units of their aircraft, the service would retain skeleton support crews at the 28 bases.

Although the bases technically would remain open, "they are taken down to almost nothing," Lempke, the adjutant general for Nebraska, said in an interview.

Sen. Christopher Bond, R-Mo., said the Air Force's recommendations are "absolutely stunning," adding that so many units are being stripped of aircraft that the service's ability to provide protection over U.S. cities could be compromised.

Bond accused the regular Air Force of treating the Air National Guard like "an unwanted stepchild."

Leaner for the future

The Air Force defends the proposals as necessary to make the service leaner and better-equipped for fighting future enemies.

Acting Air Force Secretary Michael Dominguez defended the recommendation.

The Guard needs to be consolidated at fewer locales because it is too dispersed - "not an

effective and efficient way to operate an expeditionary Air Force," he told the base-closing commission last month.

He added that the active-duty Air Force, not the Guard, had withstood the brunt of the closures in previous base-closing rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Guard leaders complain that they were cut out of senior-level meetings of active-duty Air Force officers who helped select which bases to close while mapping out future Air Force plans.

The base closing commission has until Sept. 8 to review base-closing proposals. The president has until Sept. 23 to either send them back to the panel for revisions or to forward them to Congress where the lawmakers have 45 work days to vote the list down in its entirety.

If that doesn't happen, the list of base closings goes into effect.

PLANS FOR PLANES

Among the proposals:

Arkansas: F-16s at Fort Smith Regional Airport would be divided between retirement and a base in Fresno, Calif.

Ohio: F-16s at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport would be divided between a base in Des Moines, Iowa, and retirement.

Minnesota: All F-16s based at Duluth International Airport would be retired.

Kansas and Tennessee: KC-135 tankers at Forbes Field in Topeka and at McGhee-Tyson Airport in Knoxville would be retired.

Delaware: The C-130 transports at New Castle County Airport would be split between Charlotte, N.C., and Savannah, Ga.

Local News Articles

Mississippi officials say they will fight for Keesler hospital

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Biloxi, MS)
June 5, 2005

U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor says the Pentagon's base realignments could gut Keesler Medical Center, leaving 56,000 beneficiaries looking for treatment of serious illness in civilian hospitals.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will decide by the end of the year if the full-scale military hospital should be transformed into an outpatient-only medical center with clinics and ambulatory services.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld plans to close about 180 military installations nationwide, including 33 major bases. The BRAC Commission will consider Rumsfeld's recommendations and send its own recommendation to President Bush, who must send it to Congress by Nov. 7.

Changes to the Keesler hospital would be a major shift from its existing mission. Keesler would lose its residency program, which trains about 100 doctors and nurses each year. Active-duty personnel and military retirees would lose access to certain free medical care provided at the hospital, said Taylor, D-Miss.

Keesler made the short list of threatened installations about three weeks ago.

The move to close Keesler Medical Center could save the federal government about \$23 million per year, officials said.

The hospital has an operating budget of about \$102 million per year.

Government Accountability Office officials believe the Air Force can defray the cost by sending the people that now use Keesler to civilian hospitals. The reasoning is it would be cheaper to farm out treatment than operate a hospital and pay for health coverage for military personnel.

The biggest expenditure for the hospital is drugs, which carry a price tag of \$35 million per year.

Taylor said the hospital should be spared because the decision to put it on the list was a hasty one.

"I don't think the military has thought things through. There are a lot of consequences and all of them are bad," Taylor said. He said he will be lobbying members of the commission to reconsider and will modify the Defense Authorization Bill with language that would try to improve the situation.

He said the loss of Keesler for active-duty personnel and retirees will be a substantial one.

"A young enlisted man, he leaves Keesler with his wife, a baby and no bill," Taylor said. "When they walk out of a civilian hospital, they will walk out with a wife, a baby and a bill."

A major side effect of the potential closure could be the loss of the residency program.

Brig. Gen. David Young, said he is concerned about this.

"We've been training doctors for over 50 years here. They are nationally ranked," Young said.

Keesler's hospital lost points with BRAC because the building is nearly 50 years old and its equipment is expensive to maintain, Young said.

He said 60 percent of the doctors along the Gulf Coast are here because they were trained at Keesler. That statement is backed up by an anecdote from U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss.

"The doctor that delivered both my children was in the Air Force and was stationed at the base. He married an Ocean Springs girl and moved to Pascagoula," Lott said. "He has delivered about a third of all the babies born in Pascagoula."

Lott has been staunch opponent of the BRAC process.

"I have voted against it since 1979," he said.

Lott said he will join Taylor and other state leaders to fight for Keesler, and to keep other installations intact and fully operational.

"We're going to do our best," Lott said. "We have been through three rounds, and not had a single base closed in Mississippi."

The Pentagon's plans also call for closing Naval Station Pascagoula.

Closing the submarine base in Groton won't just torpedo the economy in eastern Connecticut

Connecticut Post (Bridgeport, CT)
Rob Varnon and Marian Gail Brown
June 5, 2005

Closing the submarine base in Groton won't just torpedo the economy in eastern Connecticut. Collateral damage could spread to at least 70 businesses in the Greater Bridgeport area that have served as subcontractors for the base over the years.

The list of local businesses that have worked for the sub base includes manufacturers, architects, environmental consultants and even Bridgeport-based A Royal Flush, which makes portable toilets.

"The direct impact of the base closing is 8,000 jobs; but the indirect impact is probably double that," said Paul Timpanelli, president and chief executive officer of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, which issued the list.

The U.S. Department of Defense in May announced its intention to close Connecticut's sub base, unless the Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommends keeping it open before Sept. 8. The commission toured the base on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Paul Kelley, vice president of Milford-based Alinabal Holdings, said the damage goes beyond Connecticut, "It's a New England problem."

The BRBC listed Alinabal, which makes components for engines, machinery and assembly lines, as one of the companies with base contracts. Kelley said his company gets one or two from the base a year. He added that because of its unique products, Alinabal would probably still get work from wherever the Pentagon locates the subs.

The real problem, he said, is that some of Alinabal's suppliers and customers, located throughout New England, are also major base suppliers that have only been able to remain in business because of Groton. Without the base, those companies will probably move or close, in which case Alinabal would face higher costs for transporting supplies into the area and also lose some business.

"It's not all doom and gloom," Kelley said. "Connecticut businesses aren't throwing in the towel."

He said there's enough brainpower in the state to survive the base closing, but it could be a difficult decade. Kelley put the odds of saving the base at one in ten.

What has some local businesses really worried is the fate of Electric Boat, which makes subs in Groton. Without the base, the question of whether EB will remain in Connecticut looms large for companies in the greater Bridgeport area.

At Beta Shim, which makes a variety of custom metal stampings, laminated sheets, custom shims and packaging for the military, aerospace and automotive industries, the news about Electric Boat's possible closure -- even if it is years down the line -- is already having an effect on the company.

Both Electric Boat and the DoD are customers of the \$10 million Shelton manufacturing company. Currently, Electric Boat accounts for 5 percent of Beta Shim's revenues, and the DoD makes up an additional 20 percent of its orders.

"With Electric Boat, we used to deal with them quite a bit a few years ago, then less so. But now we are back with them and we were looking to grow our business with Electric Boat -- double it -- to about 10 percent," Zachariah Pratt, vice president of manufacturing, said. "The impact on us [of Electric Boat closing or moving out of Connecticut] could be severe because Electric Boat is one of our clients we'd like to grow."

Add to that that the 31-year-old business that started out making shims -- a part that acts as a filler that allows other parts to connect -- has 74 employees and had designs to add some 20 additional positions this year. "We are still looking for additional space to expand, but as for the additional people, that's now on hold," said Pratt, who expressed a desire to see Electric Boat stay in Connecticut. But that hope, he said, is tempered by reality. "I think the [Connecticut] base will be closed. And when these government folks do these budget cuts, they pretty much have the ball already rolling, and they've pretty much made up their minds." Timpanelli said he, with the heads of chambers of commerce and business councils from all over the state, attended a summit last week with Lt. Gov. Kevin Sullivan to discuss what can be done to stop the closing.

The group learned that the economic impact of the base's closure won't be considered as a reason for keeping it open.

The business community, Timpanelli said, will be educating people on why the base remains a viable military installation. It includes the submarine school, a research facility and the actual base all in one place, he said. Timpanelli also noted that the port is protected from weather because of its location on Long Island Sound, and that it provides quick access to the Atlantic Ocean.

Sullivan reiterated Timpanelli's points Friday, adding that placing Groton on the closure list was a mistake and smacked of politics.

But Sullivan said it's not necessarily party politics at play, but instead the decision may be more about internal struggles within the

Pentagon as different officers try to move the DOD in different directions.

According to Sullivan, it will take millions of dollars to recreate the type of facility that is in Groton somewhere else.

But Sullivan ultimately returned to economics when discussing the base's demise. He said the closure would cut "through the economy like a torpedo," and that no one in the state should be ignoring this.

Timpanelli, for his part, said that he wasn't very optimistic about the base's chances, until the meeting with Sullivan. Now, he said, he thinks the state has hope of winning the battle to keep it open.

NASA Langley Could Lose Researchers to BRAC

Daily Press (Newport News, Virginia)

Dave Schleck

June 5, 2005

The Base Realignment and Closure process that may close Fort Monroe and reorganize Fort Eustis also would affect Army employees who work at NASA Langley Research Center.

Under the BRAC recommendation, 46 civil servants and three military personnel who work at the Army Research Laboratory at Langley would move to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, according to Michael Fluharty, a spokesman for the lab.

Using space leased from NASA, researchers have been studying helicopter technology and aeronautics at Langley for about 35 years.

Their annual budget is about \$6.5 million, Fluharty said.

The plan is to consolidate Army labs at different NASA field centers, including Glenn Research Center in Ohio.

The BRAC recommendations are not definite but they are not easily changed.

A BRAC commission is reviewing the recommendations now, and they must be approved by Congress and President Bush later this year.

ATOMIC EXPANSION

Jefferson Lab has started advertising for an environmental study on a proposed expansion of the particle physics research facility. But the lab still has stiff competition -- it's tied for seventh place among 28 spending proposals the Department of Energy is considering.

The upgrade would double the power of the electron accelerator used for nuclear physics research -- from 6 billion electron volts to 12 billion. The expansion includes a new experimental hall, two stormwater retention ponds, two technical support buildings and several other facilities.

Jefferson Lab officials don't expect significant environmental impact from the expansion, if it is approved. A draft of the environmental assessment study should be complete in about a year. Final approval of the expansion will not come until after the environmental study is complete.

\$131M Hanscom expansion planned

Lowell Sun (Lowell, MA)

Tom Spoth

June 5, 2005

Three weeks after recommending that it be spared from a massive round of base closures around the country, the Pentagon has released a plan that calls for spending \$131.3 million to expand Hanscom Air Force Base.

The proposed expansion calls for adding about 1,300 new jobs at the Bedford base, and includes construction of a new administration building as well as two smaller structures for electronics and communications operations, according to Department of Defense documents released yesterday. The projects would take place in 2006 and 2007.

That spending may only be the tip of the iceberg, according to state and federal officials.

While details have yet to be hammered out, officials expect Hanscom to be the beneficiary of a massive infusion of state and federal money, as well as private investment. The base's expansion would create thousands of jobs in the region and provide a huge boost for the local economy.

U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 private-sector jobs would be created as well.

"It will maintain Massachusetts as a technology center for the Defense Department, and the future economy of Massachusetts will be technology-driven," the Lowell Democrat said yesterday.

State Sen. Susan Fargo, a Lincoln Democrat whose district includes Bedford and several surrounding communities, said those private-sector positions could be with anything from military subcontractors, "even down to a lunch place in Bedford."

Fargo said her constituents are excited about the economic boom that could result from a larger Hanscom. "It's a real dynamite asset for the state," she added.

The Pentagon's recommendations have been forwarded to a nine-member commission for Base Realignment and Closure. The commission will make its recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8.

The Pentagon's plan would close 33 major bases nationwide and realign another 29, for a projected savings of \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

Massachusetts officials such as Meehan, U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy and Gov. Mitt Romney have lobbied hard to save Hanscom, arguing the base plays a unique role in advancing military innovation and technology. The Pentagon recommended that Hanscom assume the duties of several bases slated to be closed.

Meehan said Hanscom's expansion is still not a done deal and legislators will continue to lobby for approval of the Pentagon's recommendation.

"We're optimistic, but we'll be watching it closely," he said.

The release of details is a good sign, said Chris Anderson, president of the Massachusetts Defense Technology Initiative, which is led by Kennedy and Romney and helped craft the expansion plan.

"They're obviously thinking about very specific needs that fit within the strategy," Anderson said. "Clearly, these are plans that are well under way."

State Is Facing Other Job Losses From Military's Decisions

The New York Times (New York)

Avi Salzman

June 5, 2005

The proposed closure of the submarine base in Groton would represent the most dramatic change to Connecticut's military forces by far, but it isn't the only closure or realignment that could cause job losses in the state. Reserve centers and armories in central and western Connecticut also made the Pentagon's list of proposed cuts, and military airplanes stationed in Windsor Locks could be sent to Massachusetts.

The smaller closings have not received much attention for obvious reasons. The Groton base would lose at least 50 times the numbers of personnel than all of the other military installations combined, which are expected to lose 126 jobs. Nonetheless, the Pentagon's plans to remake the state's military infrastructure come as a welcome relief to some people in the state, and as a blow to others.

The most controversial proposal from the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, known as BRAC, would move the A-10 Warthogs based at the Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station in Windsor Locks. Nine of the

planes would be sent to Barnes Air Guard Station in Westfield, Mass., about 20 miles from Bradley and considered by the Pentagon to have a slightly higher military value. Six of the planes would be retired.

"We won't have any aircraft assigned to the Air National Guard anymore in Connecticut, something we've had since 1924," said Maj. George Worrall, a spokesman for the station. "Connecticut would be one of only six states that would no longer have a flying base."

Instead, under the Pentagon recommendations, the Bradley base would become a hub for engine repair, which would bring planes, and possibly some jobs, from other states to the area.

Bradley could gain other new responsibilities. The Pentagon has proposed that the airport become the site for an air sovereignty alert system that is now at the Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. In the event of a hijacking, the base could become particularly important. On Sept. 11, 2001, F-15's from Otis were scrambled when military officials learned about the first hijackings, according to the 9/11 Commission Report.

It is unclear whether new planes would be based at Bradley to support the new mission, Major Worrall said.

Over all, the base would lose 70 jobs, according to one Pentagon estimate. Over 20 years, the Pentagon would expect to save more than \$25 million by realigning the bases.

Representative John B. Larson, a Democrat from East Hartford, said he opposes removal of the A-10's and plans to fight it.

"I think to expand its maintenance mission makes sense," he said. "To remove its core mission makes little sense given its capacity to handle everything in the region."

Numerous smaller closings would also reshape the state's military presence. Connecticut cities and towns are filled with armories and small reserve centers where members of the National

Guard and Army Reserves report one weekend every month and two weeks every year. Six of those Reserve centers could be closed under the Department of Defense plan, and as many as seven Connecticut National Guard units could end up relocating, with Reserve and Guard members traveling to consolidated training centers.

Connecticut's armories are 57 years old on average, said Lt. Col. John Whitford, a spokesman for the Connecticut National Guard. National Guard officials have been pushing for an upgrade for a few years. "BRAC has kind of nudged it a little further," Colonel Whitford said.

No longer will local communities each have their own armory. Under the proposed plan, members of the Guard and Army Reserves would train at joint readiness centers with more room and new technology.

Local and national politicians said they were generally unconcerned about the few job losses that could result from the changes to the Reserve centers. Closings in New Haven, Middletown and Fairfield would cost an estimated 56 jobs, according to the Pentagon.

"We don't feel there's a real case to be made for some of the smaller ones they're seeking to consolidate," said Representative Christopher Shays, a Republican who represents Fairfield County. A Reserve center in Fairfield is scheduled for closure under the Pentagon plan, with estimated losses of 17 jobs.

"We're really making our case in Groton," Mr. Shays said.

BRAC details are still AWOL

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)

Ray Hackett

June 6, 2005

The unclassified documents the Pentagon released this weekend pertaining to its base closing recommendations still lack the critical data to explain how Norfolk Naval Station and Kings Bay Submarine Base scored higher in

military value scores than the Groton submarine base.

"They're nibbling around the edges," Subbase Realignment Coalition Chairman John Markowicz said Sunday after reviewing the latest information. "The key information still isn't being made public."

The Pentagon is recommending closing the Groton base, transferring its 18 fast attack submarines, support commands and submarine school to Kings Bay, Ga., and Norfolk, Va. Local leaders hoping to convince the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to reverse that decision have complained loudly of the Pentagon's refusal to release the background data supporting that decision.

Under increasing pressure from Congress, the Department of Defense released hundreds of pages of documents Saturday, most of which contained information already available. Markowicz said the most interesting of the new documents were meeting minutes -- but even that information raises more questions than answers.

He cited two such meetings.

"At the Education and Training Group meeting," he said, "when they were discussing the recommendation to close New London, it was noted 'New England could be hit hard if all the Navy recommendations were followed.' But then it seems they just rubber stamped the recommendation."

Markowicz also noted at the April 14 meeting of the Industrial Cross Service Group, one month prior to the release of the base closing list, costs associated with closure were adjusted downward while savings were adjusted upward.

According to the transcript, the group adjusted the closing costs from \$41 million as presented, to \$28 million revised. Savings were revised to \$44 million, up from the \$15 million originally presented. And payback on investment, initially

presented as five years, was revised to immediately.

"Some of it's curious, but it's too early to tell," Markowicz said. "It doesn't provide much additional information, but there is some interesting data."

Markowicz said he'll brief coalition members on the new data when the group meets this morning (Monday) to continue working on its formal presentation the BRAC Commission July 6 in Boston. He said he hopes congressional representatives will also have some additional information to offer based on a review of classified data released to members of Congress last week.

"Specifically, what have they discovered? I don't know," he said. "What I've been told is that there are 24 disks, and they're very difficult to sort through. There's no search function and some of the files they've tried to open won't open, so there are some technical problems to be worked out," he said.

"And it's classified," he added. "So how much can they even tell us, that I don't know either."

**Fort Monroe's chances slim, experts say
Those involved in past base closings say
Hampton shouldn't wait to begin planning for
a shutdown.**

Daily News (Newport News, VA)
Terry Scanlon
June 6, 2005

DENVER -- Veterans of earlier rounds of base closings say there's little chance that Fort Monroe and the other 32 major military bases slated for closure will remain open.

History, combined with changes to the base-closing process, means the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will probably accept most of the recommendations made last month by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, said officials who have been involved in the process in past years.

"It's the base-closing commission," said James Gallagher, who worked on the staff of the BRAC commission in 1991 and 1993, "It's not the base-opening commission."

Officials from about 20 of the communities that face the likelihood of losing a military base, including Hampton, converged on the Colorado Convention Center over the weekend for an annual meeting of a group called An Association of Defense Communities. It includes public officials from former military towns as well as hundreds of consultants looking for work redeveloping former bases.

The base-closing process could go on for six months before a plan for closing some bases and shuffling missions among others gains approval from the closing commission, President Bush and Congress. But the weekend's message to local government officials was clear: Don't expect Rumsfeld's recommendations to change, and begin preparing for the future.

"Your ability to get off the list is incredibly limited," Aimee Houghton, who for 13 years was associate director of the nonprofit Center for Public Environmental Oversight, told a group of local officials. "So use this time right now to plan for your future."

Waiting to plan the redevelopment of the military base until after the closing process ends could hinder efforts to convert the abandoned base into private development.

Although development can't begin until the former base is cleared, to some degree, of pollution and unexploded bombs and bullets, cities across the country will be requesting federal money for the cleanup, environmental consultants say. The last ones to apply could have trouble getting it, which could cause lengthy delays in any redevelopment.

"Getting in line first can be the key to success or failure," said Kristie Reimer, a consultant with the environmental engineering firm LFR Levine Fricke.

In the past three base-closing rounds, which were in the 1990s, the closing commission upheld 85 percent of the recommendations that came from the military.

Officials who worked on those rounds and the consultants who lobbied them suggested that persuading the panel to accept changes could be more difficult this year.

The closing commission stays focused on maintaining the projected savings that the Defense Department hopes to gain, Gallagher said.

If a base comes off the closure list, the commission looks at substituting another base, but that will be less likely this year because a higher percentage of the commissioners would have to support adding a base.

In addition, there's more information for the panel to consider, and the military has made it more difficult to interpret, said James Owsley, who worked on the closing commission staff in 1995.

"It's a difficult process," he said, "and the commission's really short on time to get things done."

DoD backs up decision with partial disclosure

Foster's Online (Dover, NH)
June 05, 2005

Kittery, Maine — The Department of Defense has released hundreds of pages of declassified base closure materials used to justify shutting down the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Last week, the Pentagon released documents calling for the shipyard's closure by 2008, four years sooner than originally expected.

That report was released Wednesday on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's Web site — www.brac.gov — which caught local shipyard supporters and political officials by surprise.

What was supposed to be new information posted this weekend on the Department of Defense's BRAC Web site — www.defenselink.mil/brac — serves largely as a reflection of what has already been released by the commission, while cataloging the buildup and execution of BRAC.

The lead document, known as the Cost of Base Realignment Actions, or COBRA, details the estimated costs and savings of closure, according to the Department of Defense, as well as analysis of the cost of keeping the nation's other three naval shipyards open.

According to COBRA, the closure would mean a one-time cost of \$448.4 million, with an eventual savings of \$1.26 billion.

The costs would include military construction, personnel benefits, overhead, moving and "one-time unique costs," at numbers ranging from \$188.1 million to \$48.3 million.

The document also makes comparisons between the number of employees at each of the four military bases.

By 2008, 2,856 positions would be eliminated and 1,377 realigned at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. All of the eliminations would take place in 2008, while the realignment would occur between 2006 and 2008.

Some elected officials have labeled the information provided to them by the Pentagon as insufficient.

U.S. Sens. Susan Collins and Joseph Lieberman have threatened to use their subpoena power to obtain specific documents related to the Pentagon's base closure recommendations, including e-mails, memos and handwritten notes.

Members of the New Hampshire and Maine congressional delegations could not be reached for comment Friday afternoon or Saturday to confirm how much of the information initially

made available exclusively to them has since been dispersed to the public.

A number of shipyard supporters expressed shock last week when the new closure date was released because it happened only hours after BRAC officials toured the shipyard.

Some of those supporters have gone on to say the information provided is inaccurate and draws the wrong conclusions.

Besides the COBRA document, the Department of Defense also released a number of documents detailing the decision to move forward with BRAC, guidance on how to conduct the process, and the data used to formulate the closure list.

The package includes a number of memos from Navy Secretary Gordon England and other Navy officials announcing the beginning of BRAC, outlining the BRAC Act of 1990, and policy reminders.

In one memo, England stresses the importance of a successful BRAC round in 2005.

"It may well be our last opportunity in the foreseeable future both to reduce excess infrastructure ... and to transform the infrastructure that remains in a manner that reflects the changing mission and force structure needs of the 21st century.

"We owe it to all Americans —particularly our sailors and Marines—to make the most of this opportunity," England wrote on Nov. 25, 2002.

A third package released by the Defense Department includes analysis of the economic and environmental impacts of closure and realignment, and profiles of all communities to be affected by the process.

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard's community profile indicates the shipyard is in Portsmouth, N.H., instead of Kittery.

A fourth section, BRAC 2005 minutes, only lists information for the Department of Army, as of

Saturday afternoon, but states there are "more files to come soon."

The Pentagon has proposed shutting down 33 major bases from Maine to Hawaii. It's the first round of base closures since 1995. More than 100 other smaller facilities would also be closed.

Guard study rejected for fear of base closings

Rutland Herald (Rutland, VT)

Louis Porter

June 5, 2005

MONTPELIER – Legislators on Saturday rejected a study of Vermont National Guard deployment practices in part because of fears the state might lose federal funding for military bases.

The proposed legislative study originated in the wake of a resolution about the role of the Guard in the Iraq War brought forward at town meetings around the state this spring. The issue gained national attention. On the final day of the legislative session, however, the study resolution was returned to the House Appropriations Committee, with virtually no chance of being resurrected this year.

The resolution would have directed the Legislature to study the effects of deployments on Vermont Guard members and the local economy. The study committee would have held public meetings to solicit information.

House leaders said the move to return the resolution to committee prevented the study from being defeated outright. Other lawmakers said the vote left a rift among House Democrats.

High-ranking members of the Vermont Air National Guard have recently called their legislators to urge them to vote against the resolution, which had been stripped of any reference to the Iraq War.

Their concern, according to Adjutant Gen. Martha Rainville, commander of the Vermont National Guard, was that Vermont would lose

out in the federal Base Realignment and Closure process, although the state made it past the first cut.

"That concern is one that I share," Rainville said. "BRAC is not finished. We are still vulnerable."

Lawmakers, some of whom said they were more concerned that the resolution would appear disrespectful of the Vermont National Guard, voted 99-40 to send it back to committee.

The resolution may have given officials in Washington, D.C., the impetus to reject the innovative "community basing" idea that would train U.S. Air Force personnel alongside Vermont Air National Guard members in Vermont, Rainville said.

Vermont's Air National Guard is the only unit in the country flying an older model F-16 fighter plane that was not on the list of bases to be shut down that was released this spring, Rainville said.

"While community basing is not officially linked to us, community basing is what makes us appealing to the Air Force," Rainville said. "If we don't have community basing ... what is their impetus to modernize?"

That is a connection which Ben Scotch, who has been urging the Legislature to pass the resolution, doesn't like to make.

"What that means is you give a veto power to anyone in military authority who says 'we find this disrespectful'," said Scotch, who also worked for the Town Meeting Day resolutions that passed in 52 of the roughly 60 towns in which they were discussed. "To connect it to the issue of bases and the economic welfare of communities with military installations I find troubling, and I hope it is not a repeated pattern."

The decision also disappointed Rep. Winston Dowland, P-Derby Line. The U.S. Navy veteran served five tours of duty in Vietnam and said he

saw too much protest in his time against the military.

But the resolution and study committee, which came out of the General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee on which he serves, would have been good for the Vermont National Guard, he said.

"I tried to kill it in committee because it had so much Iraq War stuff in it," he said. "We did away with that."

The study committee of military officials, legislators and a gubernatorial appointee, could have learned if Vermont National Guard members get adequate health care, dental care and psychological care, Dowland said. It could have found out if Guard members lose benefits or jobs when they are overseas, and if they get in financial trouble, he added.

"Yes, we would have heard some anti-war stuff," Dowland said. But "I think we could have done some good. I think we missed an opportunity and it will never come back again and that's too bad."

The House members made their decision on the same day they learned that Rep. Doran Metzger, R-Milton, may be deployed with his National Guard unit before they reconvene in January. Metzger has been a vocal opponent of the study resolution.

Rep. Tim Jerman, D-Essex Junction, one of the legislators who heard from an Air National Guard officer in his district, said he is not against the text of the resolution but voted to send it back to committee because of the threat of a base closure in Vermont.

"Any threat, real or perceived, to the operation of the Vermont Air National Guard is unacceptable," he said on the floor.

There are several bases slated for closure in the Northeast and competition among them is intense, Jerman pointed out after the vote.

Rep. Francis Brooks, D-Montpelier, chairman of the House General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee, said he was surprised at the strength of the opposition to the study.

"I am surprised that people reacted to their fears and apprehensions over a rational evaluation of the resolution," said Brooks, who comes from a military family.

Some Republicans and Democrats in the House said the possibility of base closings may not have had much impact on the vote.

"It would be incredible if, indeed, a base closure decision were made over a resolution in support of the Guard," said Rep. Carolyn Partridge, D-Windham, majority leader. "I have heard that rumor."

Partridge voted not to send the resolution back to committee.

Rep. Patricia O'Donnell, R-Vernon, a member of the Appropriations Committee, said she doesn't believe the threat to bases was a factor in the vote.

"It's a huge slap in the face" to the members of the Guard, said O'Donnell, who opposed the resolution.

Opinions/ Editorials

Save 130th Keep 'em flying

The Charleston Gazette (Charleston, WV)
June 06, 2005

It's heartening that West Virginians of many sorts are teaming up in a spirited attempt to save the National Guard's top-rated 130th Airlift Wing at Yeager Airport.

Immediately after the Pentagon announced its intent to strip the unit of its cargo planes — which would wipe out its reason for existence and imperil the 1,000-plus jobs it provides to the Charleston regional economy — protest rallies were held, and local civic figures launched a "Keep 'Em Flying" resistance effort.

The Kanawha County Commission, Charleston City Council, Charleston Area Alliance and Yeager Airport board each donated \$25,000 to the grassroots group.

Iraq war heroine Jessica Lynch — who was rescued from an Iraqi hospital by a strike team delivered by one of the Charleston unit's planes — volunteered to be a spokesman for the campaign. "It's important for all West Virginians to have the base here," she told reporter Rick Steelhammer. After many surgeries for fractures she suffered in a combat ambush, Lynch still walks with a cane, but says, "I feel great, spiritually." The 2003 Sunday Gazette-Mail West Virginian of the Year is to enter West Virginia University this fall to become a kindergarten teacher.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., has taken a forceful role in the drive to save the 130th. At first, the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which has authority to reverse the Pentagon decision, refused to visit the Charleston unit. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., announced that she arranged for West Virginians to get 30 minutes before BRAC when it meets June 28 at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, where the West Virginia planes would be transferred. Then Byrd scored two breakthroughs — persuading BRAC to send a team of analysts to Yeager June 14, and persuading the BRAC chairman to visit the 130th before a verdict is reached.

"West Virginians deserve a chance to make their case to the commission before it makes any decision," Byrd said, "and having the chairman come to Charleston is a step in the right direction." The senator added that "getting the 130th off this realignment-and-closure list will not be easy," but "our job is to give them a convincing case to keep the 130th open."

Byrd said Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld "had his facts wrong, plain and simple," when he added the 130th to the downgrading list. For example, Rumsfeld said the 130th space at Yeager Airport can't handle more than eight C-130 cargo planes — but numerous more C-130s

were flown to Yeager Sunday during a rally, to prove the base's capacity.

Also Sunday, investigative reporter Paul Nyden revealed that the quality of training at overcrowded Pope AFB has been rated as dismal by military studies.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., cosponsored a bill in Congress to delay base closures until a Quadrennial Defense Review is released next year. "It will cost taxpayers much more money to operate the 130th's planes out of Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina than it does to operate them out of Charleston," Rockefeller said. "I believe that matters to taxpayers, and I believe it's about time the administration began to show some fiscal restraint."

Rockefeller added that the 130th Airlift Wing "is one of the top outfits in the entire Air Force. The unit has been repeatedly cited for its excellence." The 130th has performed extensively in the Iraq war.

The Yeager Airport wing, under National Guard direction, ranks among America's best in military readiness — but the Pope base, under the Air Force, ranks near the bottom. News reports say Air Force planes were maintained poorly, partly because former Air Force official Darleen Druyun gave contracts illegally and was sent to prison for it.

The 130th is a valuable asset to central West Virginia. It's encouraging that so many state figures are united in striving to save it.

Fort Meade growth brings opportunities, problems for area

The Annapolis Capitol (Annapolis, MD)
The Capital Editorial Board
June 05, 2005

Growth can be a tremendous boost for an area -- if it's well-handled. It can also be painful if local and state officials fail to plan for it, and big pieces of the infrastructure jigsaw puzzle -- such as roads, schools, police and fire protection, and other public services -- are not in place when

new families and new businesses arrive. If you don't believe us, there are several areas of the county where you can ask residents about this.

The county and the state have just gotten a loud growth warning from top officials at Fort George G. Meade, whose 40,000 workers already make it the state's single largest employer.

Right now some 5,400 jobs are slated to come to Fort Meade if the latest recommendations in the federal Base Realignment and Closure process are approved. But top officials at the post are saying that may be just the start. As many as 15,000 new jobs could be relocating there in the next decade as the armed forces consolidate in the Washington area and as the National Security Agency, based at Fort Meade, expands.

That's just a ballpark figure. But we're talking about a major additional load on the county's infrastructure, even if you assume that all those jobs don't materialize, that those that do arrive are phased in gradually, and that many new families actually move to other nearby jurisdictions, such as Howard County.

None of this came out of the blue for county officials - it's not for nothing that County Executive Janet Owens has been calling the area around Fort Meade and Baltimore-Washington International Airport "the Gold Coast." It's not a surprise for the developers who are already hard at work on plans for condominiums and housing.

If anyone is out of the loop, it may be the county school system, which until now has rejected plans to build a high school in fast-growing west county. Area residents want that school so badly that some have even been willing to consider letting a contractor put a rubble landfill in a rural section of Odenton, in exchange for that school and other community facilities.

Reportedly the state has been talking with the county about plans to expand Route 175, which runs past the NSA's entrance, bolster local schools, and make other improvements. State officials are just as aware as Ms. Owens that Fort Meade and the NSA are major assets for the

Maryland economy, and that smooth handling of the expected influx of employees and their families is crucial.

Those employees are going to be well-educated and well-paid. The whole situation is ideal for economic development - if infrastructure problems don't turn the growth into a shambles.

No one can say government officials haven't been warned. It's time for them to make sure their plans are in order. And one good way of doing that is to talk to - and listen to - the people who are already in the area.

Additional Notes