

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

June 10, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Affected Parties Still Awaiting Full Release Of BRAC Info

Official: BRAC List Not Gospel

Senators meet with BRAC commissioner
No politics, just pressure on military,
officials say

Thune goes own way, not Bush's

Local News Articles

Md. Quietly Plans For A Rail Link To
Meade (Baltimore, MD)

Base Closure Panel Chairman Visits Two
San Diego Facilities (San Diego, CA)

Tackett says he's confident BRAC will do
right thing (Charleston, WV)

Officials hear more about Ellsworth
recommendation (Sioux Falls, SD)

Congressman calls plans to close Cleveland
pay office wasteful (Cleveland, OH)

New general takes command at Fort Bliss
(El Paso, TX)

Kirtland Commander Leaving for Ohio
(Albuquerque, NM)

Army seeks mass transit for Meade
(Annapolis, MD)

Byrd, Jay meet to discuss 130th (Charleston,
WV)

San Diego delegation defends marine recruit
depot against closure (San Diego, CA)

Opinions/Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

National News Articles

Affected Parties Still Awaiting Full Release Of BRAC Info

National Journal

Megan Scully

June 10, 2005

With only three months to go until the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission submits its recommendations to the White House, many congressional staffers, lobbyists and analysts are spending the summer sifting through Pentagon information they say is neither well organized nor user friendly.

Defense Department officials generated hundreds of thousands of pages of documents when making their own list of base-closure recommendations, gathering more data than in any of the government's previous BRAC rounds.

"The extent of the information that has been provided to the commission and the Congress is unprecedented in terms of volume and level of detail," the Pentagon said in a statement earlier this week.

The information, including data on installations the Pentagon wants to shutter, is the key to lawmakers and lobbyists pleading their case to the BRAC commission to keep their bases open.

But the quantity of the information released so far is both a blessing and a curse. For those who must sift through documents, meeting minutes and other information page by page, the task of finding installation-specific data can be grueling and time consuming, sources said.

"It's like a needle in a haystack going through this," said an aide to a member of Congress affected by the BRAC. "We still don't know if we have all the information."

A House aide who has reviewed the information noted that "dumping data on people so they drown in their own information is not helpful, it's not a success."

Congressional staffers and lobbyists representing local communities also have voiced frustrations in searching for information pertaining to specific bases.

"It was like somebody took an MBA course in how to make things difficult," said Barry Rhoads, president of the Rhoads Group and a staff member on the 1991 BRAC commission.

Retired Army Brig. Gen. Philip Browning has already printed out enough information from the Defense Department's Web site to fill 10 thick binders with Army installation data, which he is searching for Georgia-specific base data.

"The bottom line now is that it's just a ton of material. And I'm not being critical; I have to admire it," said Browning, who now sits on the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee.

For the last several weeks, lawmakers have prodded the Pentagon to release all its BRAC-related information quickly, to give congressional staff and local communities adequate time to review the reasoning behind the department's recommendations.

Earlier this week, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairwoman Collins and ranking member Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., issued a subpoena requiring the Pentagon to turn over all BRAC information by Monday.

The Pentagon made public much of the information late last month, but has not finished scrubbing all documents for classified information.

At the same time, they must upload the documents on the department's Web site, a timely endeavor, a Pentagon spokeswoman said Thursday.

So far, the department has posted on its site justifications and analyses of each of the 222 recommendations, as well as reports from each of the services and cross-service groups.

Congress still is awaiting additional information on military-value scores, which were the Pentagon's primary consideration in making the base-closure recommendations. "Without that, you can't challenge the scoring and thus have no way of making an argument," the House aide said.

Official: BRAC List Not Gospel
20% of sites may avert closure, commissioner
says at Port visit
Florida Today
Patrick Peterson
June 10, 2005

PORT CANAVERAL - Some 15 to 20 percent of military bases scheduled for closing could be spared by the Base Realignment and Closure commission, said former U.S. Rep. James Bilbray, a BRAC commission member.

Bilbray toured the Navy Ordnance Test Unit at the Port on Thursday to help the commission decide whether it will remain on the closure list that will be sent to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Bilbray did not hint whether he would recommend that the Brevard County installation, considered a tenant of Patrick Air Force Base, remain open.

The Space Coast could lose 135 military and 59 civil-service jobs by 2007, while another 400 civilian jobs also are at risk, if the submarine unit closes. Weapons on subs are calibrated there.

"Once you close (a base), you're not going to get it back," said Bilbray of Nevada, a Bush appointee and attorney who specializes in government issues.

About 50 Space Coast citizens demonstrated to support the base as Bilbray entered a press conference.

The actual cost of relocating the base would be three times the estimated \$100 million, said demonstrator Keith Houston, board member of the Space Coast Defense Alliance.

"It's not as simple as moving a small Navy base," he added.

Houston said the Port Canaveral location allows subs quick access to deep water. A submarine can leave the port, submerge in deep water and return to port in one day. From other Atlantic ports, deep water is more than a day's travel.

The Navy plans to move the Naval Ordnance Test Unit to King's Bay, Ga., in 2008.

Bilbray admitted that the cost of moving military bases often is underestimated. He added that the need for military bases in the U.S. could

increase to accommodate an estimated 70,000 troops and 100,000 dependents based in Europe who are slated to return.

Federal maintenance of the channel would continue, even if the Navy leaves, said Stan Payne, Canaveral Port Authority chief executive officer.

The Naval base, with its turning basin, might be used for commercial expansion.

"It would seem to be an area we would be interested in," Payne said.

Senators meet with BRAC commissioner

The Associated Press
June 10, 2005

A member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission has assured New Mexico's two senators that data behind the Pentagon's decision to recommend the closure of Cannon Air Force Base would be closely scrutinized before the base's fate is decided.

Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said they received the assurance from retired Brig. Gen. Sue Turner during a telephone call Thursday to discuss the base and the commission's upcoming hearing in Clovis.

The senators told Turner they are concerned about the economic impact that closing the base would have on eastern New Mexico and West Texas.

They also said Cannon is the only spot in the nation where airspace is increasing. The Air Force has been working to expand the training range around Cannon - both in space and supersonic capabilities. The base's supporters have expressed frustration that the Pentagon did not take the planned expansion into account in its analysis.

"The more we review the data the Pentagon is giving us for wanting to close Cannon, the more skeptical I become that the justifications have

merit," Domenici said. "I think it's important that the BRAC commissioners have a sense of the misgivings we have."

Bingaman said that as the days go on, more flaws are being found in the Pentagon's rationale for putting Cannon on the closure list.

"We have a strong case to make for keeping Cannon open and based on the conversations we've had so far with BRAC commissioners we have reason to believe they will hear us out," Bingaman said.

The next step for the base commission is to review the Pentagon's recommendations and hold hearings, including the June 24 hearing in Clovis. It would take five of the nine commissioners to remove a base from the list.

The panel's recommendations are due to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president may accept or reject the entire list. If he accepts it, it goes to Congress for a yes or no vote, again on the entire list.

The Pentagon has estimated it would save \$2.7 billion over 20 years by closing Cannon, costing 2,385 military employees and 384 civilian jobs on base and about 2,000 more indirect jobs. Cannon's economic impact has been estimated at \$200 million a year - about a third of the local economy.

No politics, just pressure on military, officials say

The Associated Press (Sioux Falls, SD)
Bob Anez
June 9, 2005

Democrats Sen. Max Baucus and Gov. Brian Schweitzer said there's nothing political about their combined efforts to pressure federal military officials not to remove fighter planes from the Montana Air National Guard base at Great Falls.

They also denied an allegation by a spokesman for Rep. Denny Rehberg, R-Mont., that Montana's three congressional members are not

cooperating on protecting the fighter wing and finding new missions for the Guard base and Malmstrom Air Force Base.

"All of us on the delegation are working toward the same goal," said Baucus, Montana's senior senator. "We're working together. We're a team."

Schweitzer said politics was not an issue when he, Baucus and Great Falls Mayor Randy Gray met with key Pentagon officials Thursday in Washington, D.C., to make their case for keeping the Guard fighters in the state.

Their comments came in response to remarks made Wednesday by Rehberg staffer, Brad Keena, who assailed Baucus and Schweitzer for "playing politics" with the Defense Department recommendation last month to pull the Guard's air wing, by scheduling the meeting even though Rehberg and Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., could not attend.

"I think we should be working together as a group," Keena told the Great Falls Tribune.

Erik Iverson, Rehberg's chief of staff, said his boss endorses those comments. While Rehberg does not like the way the meeting was set up by Baucus, the discussions with top U.S. Air Force brass were likely beneficial, he acknowledged.

"It's all helpful," he said. "At the end of the day, the delegation and the governor will work together on this."

Burns applauded efforts of Baucus and Schweitzer to fight the Pentagon proposal. "Everything that they've done has been good," he said. "There's always a little politics, but you've got to overlook it."

Iverson said Rehberg was peeved that Baucus announced Thursday's meeting May 18 without waiting to find out if the two Republicans could attend.

"It's about having your priorities straight," he said. "The priority isn't politics. It isn't getting your name in the paper. It's helping Montana."

Baucus said he gave "more than sufficient notice" of the meeting to Burns and Rehberg, and simply wanted to approach military officials quickly to argue the case for the Air Guard unit to be left alone. "We've got to move; the early bird gets the worm," he said.

Baucus, Schweitzer and Gray said they met Wednesday with retired Adm. Harold W. Gehman, a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to explain why the commission should reject the proposal to withdraw the F-16 fighters.

On Thursday, the trio talked with Air Force Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, director of the Air National Guard, and Lt. Gen. Stephen Wood, Air Force deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, about the Air Guard unit and add planes to Malmstrom or the Guard base.

"There's a lot of potential there," Baucus said. "We in Montana should have a flying mission. Every state should have a flying mission."

He mentioned the possibility of getting a unit that deals with unmanned aircraft, while Gray said Montana could be an ideal place for a homeland security operation related to the long Montana-Canadian border.

Thune goes own way, not Bush's

The Hill

Geoff Earle

June 9, 2005

Eight months after his hard-fought and symbolic defeat of Minority Leader Tom Daschle, Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) is demonstrating a willingness to buck the Republican administration that urged him to run and sent President Bush and Vice President Cheney to campaign for him.

Thune's boldest move yet is his not-too-subtle signal that he will oppose the nomination of John Bolton as ambassador to the United Nations to protest the administration's decision

to close Ellsworth Air Force Base, the state's second largest employer.

"I don't think he's the best person for the job," Thune said of Bolton yesterday. "People can ascribe whatever they want to [this decision]. What I've said is, I take our foreign-policy posture very seriously and I take our defense posture very seriously. The base issue is something extremely important to me."

He added, "I'm going to do anything and everything within my power, and use all tools at my disposal" to get Ellsworth off the base closure list.

But Thune has also demonstrated an independent streak on other issues, including agriculture programs, healthcare and trade.

"I'm going to do what is in the best interest of South Dakota - always, first and absolutely," Thune told The Hill. "If I disagree with the president, I'm going to let him know that."

Some Republicans have privately questioned the wisdom of linking two such apparently unrelated issues - one GOP source called it a rookie mistake. But several GOP senators expressed an appreciation for Thune's position. He campaigned on his close ties to the White House, pledging to use his access to prevent closure of the base.

"The [base closing] thing obviously hurts South Dakota tremendously," said Sen. Robert Bennett (R-Utah). "He has to demonstrate to his folks back home that he's willing to fight for it." Asked whether fellow Republicans understood Thune's position, and his decision to oppose the Bolton nomination, Bennett replied, "I think so, and I think the White House does."

Thune has introduced legislation to delay the latest round of base realignment and closure (BRAC) until most U.S. troops return from Iraq and closing of overseas military bases is complete. But the bill, which has 18 co-sponsors, is not expected to succeed because a majority of states escaped major harm or did

well under the latest round of closings. "We'll see where the votes are," Thune said.

He said the administration has urged him to reconsider his position on Bolton's nomination.

As at least one pro-Bush blog has noted that in April Thune said on MSNBC's "Hardball" that Bolton was a "reform-minded person" and "a guy who shakes things up," adding, "I think the U.N. needs that." But some conservative media outlets, including talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh, have defended Thune.

Thune has joined with Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) on a bill to allow for the reimportation of prescription drugs from Canada and other countries - a position strongly opposed by Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and the White House.

"I don't think the leadership is ever going to move it as a free-standing bill," Thune said. "So we'll probably have to offer it as an amendment." But Thune noted that the idea of reimportation has broad support within the Senate.

Thune may soon find himself clashing with the administration on a bill to reduce trade barriers with five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic because of its effect on sugar-beet growers.

"I've got some issues with CAFTA," the Central America Free Trade Agreement, he said. "It's sugar, it's cattle, it's a range of things."

Thune has been aided in Washington by close relations with party leaders and has not carved out a role as a party maverick. In the House, he had a seat at the table during GOP leadership meetings.

One Republican senator noted that now that Thune is in the Senate, the administration cannot take his vote for granted - just as no senator can be taken for granted. Given how President Bush and his advisers courted Thune to run for his seat - he gave up a clear shot at the South Dakota governorship - Thune may have more

flexibility than most freshman senators to go his own way.

But Thune has yet to cement relations with Senate Democrats, who are still smarting over Thune's bitter election campaign and who remain loyal to Daschle.

"I'm sure the time will come when [Democratic] senators will work with him," said Sen. Dick Durbin (Ill.), the Democratic whip, who noted that he hasn't had the opportunity to work with Thune yet. "There were campaign tactics used, and whether he was responsible for it, I can't say. I miss Tom Daschle. I make no bones about it."

Thune is planning to offer an amendment to the defense authorization bill with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) to extend child care coverage for children who lose a parent on active military duty. Thune and Clinton put out a joint release on the idea.

Thune noted that he also has worked with Democrats on ethanol legislation, and his BRAC bill has attracted Democratic support.

"I understand, and I'm trying to be sensitive to the long-term relationships that were here before I got here," he said. "At some point, you move on. I'm certainly going to reach out."

Local News Articles

Md. Quietly Plans For A Rail Link To Meade

Discussions described as conceptual; new line would be at least 20 years away

Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, MD)

Phillip McGowan

June 10, 2005

State transportation officials have quietly stepped up planning of a major rail link between the Washington area and Fort Meade, where Pentagon shifts are expected to prompt significant growth in coming years.

Transportation Secretary Robert L. Flanagan said his agency began looking at extending the Washington-area Metro several months ago, and he described the discussions as conceptual. The project is at least two decades from completion and could cost a minimum of \$1 billion.

"[The] initial concept is somewhat daunting ... but it's worth pursuing," he said.

Political and transportation leaders said that decades of planning would have to be done before the rail line could be extended to Fort Meade. Residents would have to be won over, and environmental obstacles would have to be overcome before the project could become reality.

Flanagan's comments came a day after officials at Fort Meade revealed a three-decade master plan to manage growth in and around the 5,400-acre Army post in western Anne Arundel County. One of the master plan's provisions includes extending the Washington Metro's Green Line by 10 miles, from Greenbelt to Fort Meade, and potentially on to Baltimore. Such a move would accommodate tens of thousands of defense-related jobs expected to be generated by Fort Meade, which has seen its profile rise nationally as a center for defense and information technology.

Echoing other political and business leaders, the transportation secretary said that the anticipated jobs and development in the coming decades along the Baltimore-Washington corridor necessitates seeking transportation solutions, one of them being the possibility of a Metro rail extension.

40,000 jobs

Fort Meade is one of Maryland's largest employers, with about 40,000 jobs. The on-post presence of the National Security Agency generates thousands more in nearby high-technology complexes that house some of the nation's largest defense contractors. More large-scale office space is going up around Fort Meade to accommodate more of these companies.

The transportation secretary said that he has not been in contact with Fort Meade representatives about this concept, which includes continuing the rail extension from the Army post an additional 10 miles to Baltimore-Washington International Airport. The potential cost of that extension could be another \$1 billion.

"We want to talk to all of the possible parties and interests," Flanagan said. "Fort Meade is among those interests."

He added: "We take the support of Fort Meade very seriously and give it a great deal of weight."

Some said that the challenges of building the line may prove to be overwhelming.

"That won't happen in our lifetime," said Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, a Democrat whose district includes Fort Meade.

Flanagan declined to estimate a specific cost for such a project, which, as detailed yesterday, would run along the CSX line that is used for the MARC Camden trains.

The CSX line, going north from Greenbelt, cuts through a Department of Agriculture research center, runs alongside U.S. 1 and continues through Laurel. Flanagan said that line could then follow Route 32 toward the Fort Meade area and continue to BWI.

Anne Arundel County Executive Janet S. Owens and Fort Meade's commander, Col. John W. Ives, who oversaw development of the master plan, said that a location near the National Business Park, which is across the Baltimore-Washington Parkway from Fort Meade, could serve as a Metro stop.

\$100 million a mile

A spokesman for Flanagan confirmed what other transportation officials have said: That each mile of rail would cost at least \$100 million. At that rate, the price tag for the Greenbelt-to-Fort Meade extension would be at least \$1 billion.

Flanagan mentioned two possible funding sources: One involves creating a special tax assessment district for nearby businesses that would benefit from a rail line. He said a similar concept is being used to help fund a Metro extension to Washington Dulles International Airport in Northern Virginia. Another revenue generator could involve an incremental real estate tax on businesses that move into the area, he said.

Maryland projects are usually funded in equal parts from state and federal sources, Flanagan said, but he hoped that the U.S. government would contribute a greater share, considering the benefit to Fort Meade.

But the question remains whether federal funding could be obtained. The Dulles line is one of 14 projects from across the nation that federal transit officials have recommended to Congress for next year.

The 23-mile extension from Metro's Orange Line to just beyond Dulles is expected to cost about \$3.5 billion. The first environmental study was conducted in 2000, and the project is not expected to be finished until 2015.

Pentagon proposal

The Pentagon recently recommended transferring 5,300 jobs to Fort Meade as part of its base realignment and closure process, mostly related to the National Security Agency. State officials estimate that influx would generate at least 5,000 more jobs, mostly in the form of NSA contractors, in the next seven years.

Part of Fort Meade's master plan includes using the post's 400-acre golf course as a site for several federal agencies seeking more secure confines that Meade could provide. Such a move could create 20,000 more jobs on post.

Through a spokeswoman, Owens said she was "pleased that the secretary has listened to the concerns of the BWI Business Partnership," which serves the interests of business along the

Baltimore-Washington corridor and lobbies on behalf of the fort. "This is good news."

Base Closure Panel Chairman Visits Two San Diego Facilities

San Diego Union-Tribune (San Diego, CA)

David E. Graham

June 9, 2005

The chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure commission yesterday visited two local facilities facing cuts: the Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado and the San Diego Naval Medical Center in Balboa Park.

Anthony Principi said afterward that he wonders if a proposed move of some medical training could be readily accommodated in Texas, and he lauded increased efficiencies at North Island Naval Air Station, such as turnaround times for returning a fighter jet to a fleet.

Principi offered no judgments about what the commission ultimately would say about the Pentagon's recommendations for closures and reductions. Rather, he was gathering observations to give to other commission members who have fanned out to visit bases.

Even so, he said that during his inspection he came away with "no reason to overturn" the Pentagon's recommendations.

The Naval Medical Center stands to lose 1,630 people, most of them enlisted sailors enrolled in medical courses, and 460 positions could be eliminated at the Coronado base.

The medical training probably could be done elsewhere, at facilities in Texas, and some of the Coronado positions possibly could be eliminated through attrition, Principi said.

Base changes for San Diego County have been described as minimal. The county's 14 military bases and commands contribute about \$18 billion to the local economy and employ more than 110,000 people.

Other proposed personnel cuts locally include 240 jobs at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in San Diego, 144 at Camp Pendleton and 118 at the Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station.

"Very few changes are proposed for California generally and San Diego specifically," Principi said.

Asked whether boot-camp programs at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Camp Pendleton might be a place for consolidation, Principi said that is the kind of question the commission will consider.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has recommended that 33 major bases in 22 states be closed and 26,187 jobs eliminated as part of the largest-ever reduction of the armed forces.

Rumsfeld's recommendations must be approved by the commission, President Bush and Congress.

Base Realignment and Closure commissioners must make their final recommendations to Bush by Sept. 8.

Defense officials have said some of the changes under consideration are an attempt to combine different military services' operations and strengths, such as folding the medical care provided separately at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington into the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

In another example, the Army would move the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, N.C., to the Air Force's base in Eglin, Fla., so that both services' elite troops could train together more easily.

Tackett says he's confident BRAC will do right thing

The Associated Press (Chalreston, WV)
June 9, 2005

A one-day visit by representatives from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will give the West Virginia Air National Guard its first

chance to make a pitch for keeping its 130th Air Lift Wing flying, Adj. Gen. Allen Tackett said Thursday.

"They are the good group," Tackett said of Monday's BRAC visit. "They are the honest brokers ... to turn around the bad decision by the Department of Defense."

Last month the DOD recommended that the 130th's eight C-130 cargo planes be transferred to Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. The recommendation said the Charleston unit did not have enough space to accommodate an operational force of 16 planes.

It was among a series of recommendations the DOD made to close or downsize 62 major military bases and more than 700 smaller installations throughout the country.

Tackett said the recommendation was based on a faulty assumption that the unit could only handle eight planes. When military planners were looking at bases nationwide, they only asked for the 130th's parking plan.

Since the unit only has eight planes, Tackett said information covering eight planes was sent.

"They didn't ask 'How many planes can you park?'" he said.

Nine planes were parked at the base Thursday. Last weekend, several C-130s were flown in and a total of 15 were parked at the mountaintop base.

On Monday, two BRAC analysts and Commissioner Harold W. Gehman Jr. of Virginia, a retired Navy admiral and former NATO supreme allied commander, will visit the 130th. The three will listen to a series of private briefings by base officials and leave by 3 p.m.

Among the presentations will be how it is cost effective for the military to keep the 130th open, Tackett said. The unit has the highest personnel strength of any Air Guard C-130 base, 103.6 percent, and is second in readiness.

"We stand a good chance to reverse this process," Tackett said.

The DOD also recommended transferring several of the unit's functions to the 167th Air Lift Wing in Martinsburg and closing Army Reserve Centers in Huntington and Fairmont, and the Navy-Marine Corps Reserve Center in Moundsville. An accompanying document indicates reserve centers in Elkins and Ripley also would be affected by the consolidation of reserve centers.

The commission will hold a public hearing on the recommendations for West Virginia and other states in Charlotte, N.C., on June 28. The nine-member commission can change the list before it is submitted to the White House and Congress this fall.

Officials hear more about Ellsworth recommendation

The Associated Press (Sioux Falls, SD)
June 9, 2005

Two U.S. Air Force officials met with the state's congressional delegation and governor on Thursday to explain a Pentagon recommendation to close Ellsworth Air Force Base and move its B1-B bombers to another base.

Rep. Stephanie Herseth and Sens. John Thune and Tim Johnson described it as a good meeting with some new information, no surprises and a pledge from the Air Force to provide more information.

"We did get some questions answered and it helped provide a little bit of insight into the thought process that was used to make the decision, but we still are going to press them for answers to more of the questions," said Thune.

"The Air Force officials explained their decision-making process. I think we have a slightly better understanding of what they are doing in that process," Johnson said.

Joining the delegation and Gov. Mike Rounds at the meeting was Pat McElgunn, who heads the

Ellsworth Task Force that's trying to save the base and its 3,800 military and civilian jobs.

Representing the Air Force were Fred Pease, the deputy undersecretary for basing and infrastructure analysis, and Maj. Gen. Gary Heckman.

The meeting resulted from discussions between Herseth and the secretary of the Air Force, said her spokesman, Russ Levsen.

"Since we've had significant delays in getting information from the Department of Defense, this meeting was helpful as we prepare for the field hearing on June 21," Herseth said.

The Ellsworth Task Force and others want to review information used by the Pentagon in making its decision and prepare a rebuttal for a Base Realignment and Closure Commission hearing in Rapid City June 21.

The Pentagon's recommendations go to BRAC, which can make changes before the report goes to President Bush and Congress.

Base supporters already have a compelling argument to keep the base open because of its military value and economic impact in South Dakota, but need more information from the Air Force to "fill in the blanks," said Thune.

Ellsworth's proponents say the Air Force has been slow to release information it used in making its recommendation, a complaint made in other states.

Two members of a Senate committee, Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., on Tuesday issued a subpoena to force the Department of Defense to release more documents on its base-closing process.

"There is a lot of frustration up here and what ... (they did) is evidence of the level of frustration Congress is feeling right now," Thune said.

Congressman calls plans to close Cleveland pay office wasteful

The Associated Press (Cleveland, OH)
June 9, 2005

A Department of Defense plan to reduce or close a military payroll office in Cleveland should be considered financially wasteful, an Ohio congressman said in a letter Thursday.

The plan could result in the loss of about 1,200 jobs.

U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette, R-Ohio, in a 16-page letter to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, argued that the military's plans for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Cleveland would be a "colossal waste of taxpayer money."

LaTourette said any savings would not occur until 2012, but it will cost \$29 million to shutter it.

All facilities on the military's hit list are fighting for their lives. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission is expected to send its decisions to President Bush by Sept. 8.

The Cleveland DFAS would keep only about 150 employees whose work is for military retirees and their survivors. They work for a contractor.

A member of the BRAC commission, retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton, will visit Cleveland June 23 to meet with managers and employees and members of the Ohio congressional delegation. That meeting is closed to the public. A regional meeting with the commission is scheduled for June 27 in Buffalo.

BRAC spokesman Robert McCreary had no direct response to the LaTourette letter.

"No decisions have been made anywhere," he said. "We're reviewing the (Department of Defense) recommendations for bases, installations and facilities across the country."

New general takes command at Fort Bliss

The Associated Press (El Paso, TX)

Alicia A. Caldwell
June 9, 2005

Standing under a cloudless blue sky, 5,000 Fort Bliss soldiers welcomed their new commander Thursday.

Brig. Gen. Robert P. Lennox, a U.S. Military Academy graduate, officially took charge of the post during an hourlong ceremony.

Lennox has twice served at Fort Bliss, including a two-year stint as deputy commanding general, base spokeswoman Jean Offutt said.

The 49-year-old Houston native succeeds Maj. General Michael A. Vane, who will now be assigned to the Pentagon.

Gen. Kevin P. Byrnes, commanding general of the Army's training and doctrine command, praised Vane and Lennox as he announced Lennox's return to the base. He described Lennox as "the best for the job" at a post with "tough times ahead."

Lennox is taking control of the 1.1 million-acre post as base and local officials await a final decision on a realignment proposal that could send more than 11,000 new soldiers and civilians to Fort Bliss.

If President Bush approves the Pentagon recommendations later this year, the base would nearly double in personnel, Offutt said. Base officials are already preparing for the arrival this year of about 3,800 soldiers who will make up the 4th Brigade Combat team.

And while Lennox could oversee a massive influx, the realignment could also mean the loss of the post's Army Air Defense Artillery School, long a Fort Bliss institution.

El Paso Mayor-elect John Cook, who was among several municipal and international officials at Thursday's ceremony, said the city will continue to lobby the federal government to leave the air defense school at Fort Bliss.

But the city also will continue preparations for the potential economic boon the influx of soldiers could mean to the city, Cook said.

Kirtland Commander Leaving for Ohio

Albuquerque Journal (Albuquerque, NM)

Miguel Navrot

June 9, 2005

Andrews Has Been Criticized in Area

Col. Henry Andrews, Kirtland Air Force Base's commander, is departing in July for Ohio.

Andrews will serve as a special assistant at the Plans and Programs office for Air Force Material Command headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Kirtland announced June 1. Air Force Material Command oversees Kirtland and related research bases around the nation.

As part of his duties, Andrews will be at the center of the command's ongoing base closure and realignment issues, according to a Kirtland news release.

"It has been a privilege to live and serve in Albuquerque," Andrews said. "My family and I love it here and will miss it very much. Many of the successes at Kirtland have their roots in the vibrant partnership we have with our host city and state."

Andrews has been the subject of some criticism from East Mountains recreation enthusiasts during the two years leading the 377th Air Base Wing at Kirtland.

In July 2003, soon after Andrews' arrival, the base proposed moving an eastern fence for the 52,000-acre Kirtland property on the eastern slopes of the Manzano Mountains, attracting ire from nature enthusiasts who would be blocked by the closure from trails in nearby Otero Canyon.

In August, Andrews approved a 104-page environmental study for the \$2.2 million fencing

plan. The proposal has since crawled along under review in Washington.

Friends of Otero, a grassroots group that supports keeping the trails open for mountain bikers and others, claims the base could realign the fence to preserve access to the trails system. New Mexico lawmakers have urged base officials to consider the community impact of its plan.

Coincidentally, Andrews' successor will arrive from Wright-Patterson, which is near Dayton.

Col. Terrence A. Feehan, a 1984 Air Force Academy graduate, heads the F-15C Eagle fighter jet program office, overseeing Air Force operations of the aircraft. Feehan brings a background heavy in research and testing.

Kirtland, a multifaceted bed of energy, light and space research, is responsible for roughly 24,000 jobs at the base.

Andrews' tour of Kirtland has lasted two years, the expected length for an Air Force wing commander.

The Kirtland Partnership Committee, a private group that works to bolster the local base's profile among decision makers, praised Andrews for his work with the community.

Chairman Sherman McCorkle said losing Andrews "is a loss to our community and to New Mexico." McCorkle also said Andrews is one of the top Kirtland commanders he has worked with in 30 years.

"He's done things at Kirtland that no commander has ever done," said committee director Stuart Purviance.

Andrews' tenure has coincided with growth and improvements at Kirtland since his arrival in 2003. Among those projects:

- * Construction of 870 new base homes for airmen of all ranks;

* Promotion of base work opportunities for area high school and college students; and

* An increase of roughly 200 research employees under the Pentagon's base realignment plans.

Andrews also has worked with principals, teachers and parents to improve the Air Force's relations with city schools. More than 500 public school students have parents living on Kirtland.

Army seeks mass transit for Meade

The Capital (Annapolis, MD)

David E. Leiva

June 9, 2005

Army officials plan to go to the county next week with a proposal to carve out a piece of federal land that can be used to boost mass transit for thousands of new jobs expected at Fort George G. Meade, a top official said yesterday.

Col. John W. Ives, installation commander, said he would send his deputy, Bruce Hopkins, to seek permission to extend bus lines onto Fort Meade as one of several initiatives expected to come from a comprehensive plan he signed yesterday.

The colonel said the growth of Fort Meade could one day lead to Washington-to-Baltimore Metro service and a MARC commuter rail stop at the post, ideas that were met with applause from business executives and elected officials gathered at Club Meade.

"The installation's strategic location gives it enduring importance, and the approval of this expansion plan ensures that we will remain relevant and ready to defend our nation for years to come," he said in a prepared statement.

The Comprehensive Expansion Master Plan is a preemptive effort by the Army to deal with the slam on surrounding infrastructure expected when thousands of new workers arrive over the next decade.

Col. Ives, who will retire this summer, made his off-hand comments about mass transit during a goodbye ceremony at the club. Hours after the colonel spoke, a Fort Meade spokesman appeared to backpedal.

"The Army does not have a plan for a Metro or MARC line," spokesman Steven Field said. "Colonel Ives today was simply echoing comments made by many Maryland state officials, including (Maryland DBED Secretary Aris Melissaratos), that it makes economic sense to enhance the Baltimore-Washington corridor with a Metro line that would integrate the economic activity in the region.

"Such a move would be welcomed by Fort Meade because the CEMP postures the installation for growth."

County and state officials also were caught off guard. Through a spokesman, County Executive Janet S. Owens declined to comment yesterday, saying she had not seen or heard of the master plan. Ms. Owens was at the meeting, where she received a civilian award for her support of the post.

"Ms. Owens looks forward to an official briefing in the coming weeks," said spokesman Jody Couser.

Erin Henson, spokesman for the Maryland Department of Transportation, said her agency has not been in contact with Fort Meade officials.

"Our understanding is that there has not been any formal discussion with MDOT about a transit facility at Fort Meade," Ms. Henson said.

Officials with METRO, which serves the Washington area with bus and rail service, could not be reached for comment.

However, in an online chat Friday, METRO General Manager Richard White said the expansion plan adopted in 1999 does not include a proposal to extend service from the station in Greenbelt to Baltimore-Washington

International Airport. But he called the 19-mile extension "feasible" along existing CSX rails.

The state's commuter rail link between Baltimore and Washington already serves the area with stations in Odenton and BWI Airport. But with thousands of people already using the line every day and more jobs coming to the area, state officials have begun looking for possible ways to expand the service.

Although the rail tracks run along the border of Fort Meade, there are a number of roadblocks to using the service to reach the post. The county does not operate a bus service, the state does not provide a bus link between the fort and its station.

In signing the comprehensive plan yesterday - the first of its kind in the Army - Col. Ives said the Army decided to "take a simple vision and quantifying it on a document with six principles."

Those principles include minimizing energy consumption, protecting and conserving water, adhering to growth limitations and preserving historic buildings.

"This plan provides a vision for the (30 plus years) development of the Fort Meade installation. The results of implementing this plan will provide a distinctive atmosphere that is conducive to high technology, intelligence, administrative and training missions performed by current and future tenants," the document said.

The plan, started soon after Col. Ives arrived four years ago, will not be made public because it contains security preparations, a Meade spokesman said.

About 41,000 vehicles stroll through the post each day, and more are expected if President Bush and Congress approves recommendations made by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Nearly 5,400 jobs are slated to come due to the military's base consolidation with another 7,500

employees the National Security Agency has said it would hire. Under the BRAC recommendations, \$300 million is also earmarked for construction projects, not infrastructure.

And in other developments last week, Fort Meade officials said they expect up to an additional 15,000 federal workers and contractors once leases in commercial buildings come due over the next decade in spots throughout the Washington region as a cost-saving measure.

The coming of thousands of new cars and people to the area has raised questions on whether the state and county could accommodate all of this in short order.

County officials have repeatedly said Anne Arundel is well prepared for traffic, schools, housing and services.

However, experts in the development field said government officials are gambling that people whose jobs move to the post from Northern Virginia and the Washington suburbs will commute for five years before buying a home near the post. That would buy Anne Arundel and the state time on infrastructure improvements.

The county expects to complete a study of the Annapolis Road corridor between Routes 170 and 295 that would allow for a formal plan and design to begin by the end of the month.

Byrd, Jay meet to discuss 130th

Charleston Gazette (Charleston, WV)

June 9, 2005

Sen. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, both D-W.Va., met in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday afternoon with a group of Kanawha County residents about keeping the 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission member Harold W. Gehman Jr., a retired Navy admiral, will visit Charleston on Monday.

Byrd said, "The case that Secretary Rumsfeld has made to take the planes from the 130th Airlift Wing is just plain wrong. He either ignored the facts or was given bad information."

Rockefeller said Rumsfeld "doesn't understand the value of the Guard to national security, homeland security, and our overall force structure. Our maintenance crews are committed to these airplanes. Our pilots are top notch. They have extensive experience. They know these planes personally. We've got to continue to fight to keep these planes, and these Guardsmen, in West Virginia."

Currently, the 130th Airlift Wing has a fleet of eight C-130s at Yeager. Byrd and others have pointed out Yeager's hangars, fire suppression system, fuel depot and other facilities can support a fleet of 16 C-130s. Rumsfeld said the airport could not support more than eight aircraft.

Ret. National Guard Col. Bill Peters, past commander of the 130th Airlift Wing and leader of the grassroots "Keep 'Em Flying," said, "We really need to show that this base is more than what is reflected in the Secretary's report."

Rumsfeld and the Defense Department want to move the eight C-130H planes now housed at Yeager to Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. The BRAC Commission has the authority to stop those plans.

San Diego delegation defends marine recruit depot against closure

Copley News Service (San Diego, CA)
Otto Kreisher
June 9, 2005

The San Diego County congressional delegation reacted quickly and strongly Thursday against the base closure and realignment commission chairman's statement that the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego might be added to the list of closure candidates.

In a bipartisan response, delegation members praised the historic depot's contribution to national defense and said the cost of reproducing its capabilities elsewhere would be unreasonable.

"MCRD is one of the most cost effective military operations in the United States. It's a very small piece of property, but very effectively turns out the finest fighting forces in the world," said House Armed Services Committee chairman Duncan Hunter, R-El Cajon.

If the depot were closed "you'd have to replicate hundreds of millions of dollars in construction ... at another site," Hunter said. "Taxpayers would ask why."

"MCRD is such a valuable military asset, to the Marine Corps, the military and the country," said Rep. Susan Davis, D-San Diego, an Armed Services Committee member whose district includes the depot. "If the commission studies it, they can't deny that."

Rep Randy Cunningham, R-Rancho Santa Fe, also suggested that when the commission analyses the data they will agree "that MCRD is a valuable facility well suited to meeting the Marine recruit training mission."

Moving the training from San Diego would "not only cost too much money, but, more important, it could interfere with equally vital training at other Marine Corps bases," Cunningham, a member of the Defense Appropriations subcommittee, added.

"I support the BRAC process and have confidence in the leadership of Chairman Principi," said Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista. "I am confident that the commission will agree that San Diego remains the best location for Marine basic training."

Rep. Bob Filner, D-San Diego, could not be reached for comment.

Hunter and Davis pledged to convey their message personally to BRAC commission chairman Anthony Principi, who triggered the

alarm with his statements during a visit Wednesday to San Diego military facilities that were on the Pentagon's list for major reductions.

But Principi said commissioners want to see whether money could be saved by closing the depot and shifting recruit training to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

Because of its urban and congested location next to San Diego International Airport, the depot's weapons and field training are conducted at Pendleton.

The depot is "clearly one of the bases that will be considered" for closure, Principi told reporters after visiting the San Diego Naval Medical Center and the Navy Amphibious Base Coronado, the only San Diego-area facilities slated for significant reductions by the Pentagon.

Although it was considered in previous base closure rounds, the depot was not on the Pentagon's new list, which was released May 13.

Principi noted, however, that Gen. Michael Hagee, the Marine Corps commandant, told the commission at a hearing here that the Marines "nominated the recruit depot for closure." But, Hagee added, "when it went through the analytical process, we found that to have the same capability elsewhere would cost us more."

Principi also noted that the Navy and Air Force have only one recruit training facility each, while the smaller Marine Corps still has two boot camps, at San Diego and Parris Island, S.C.

But Hunter pointed out that he had legislation enacted requiring the services to retain the capability to "surge" if a crisis required a rapid increase in forces. "The idea of having only a single (Marine) recruit training site is not efficient," he said.

Although the recruit depot has been studied as a possible way to expand Lindbergh Field, Hunter and Davis said it would be of little help because it would not provide enough area to build a second runway, particularly since many of its

building are historic landmarks and could not be destroyed.

Despite Principi's comments, adding the depot to the potential closure list would be difficult because Congress changed the BRAC law to require seven of the nine commissioners to vote to add anything to the Pentagon's list. In previous rounds it only took five votes to add a base.

The depot trains about 16,000 recruits a year and has about 1,700 Marines and sailors and 900 civilians permanently assigned.

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes