

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

July 5, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

[BRAC commission to review more bases](#)

National News Articles

[More Bases May Be Closed](#)

[Pentagon Is Asked To Justify Parts Of Base-Closing Plan](#)

[GAO Questions Base-Closure Savings](#)

[Air Guard Feels Slighted By Air Force](#)

[The Losers Cry Foul Over Military Cuts](#)

[As Base Closings Loom, US Gives Grants For Transition Plans](#)

[GAO Questions Sub Base Decision](#)

[Thune challenges past GAO actions](#)

[Review questions Pentagon's base closure cost savings estimates](#)

[Emotions aside, base proponents will talk numbers in Boston](#)

[New England states prepare for critical base closing hearing](#)

[Questions about Air National Guard units raises hope Ohio unit could survive](#)

[Army may have overstated cost savings of base closures](#)

Local News Articles

[Navy Brass Applaud Shipyard \(Portsmouth, ME\)](#)

[Proposal To Close Pope Air Force Base Under Scrutiny \(Fayetteville, NC\)](#)

[Lawrence Military Jobs Questioned \(Indianapolis, IN\)](#)

[Future Unclear At Pearl Harbor \(Honolulu, HI\)](#)

[Kennedy Calls Base Closing Risky \(Boston, MA\)](#)

[Workers Hopeful Of Maintaining Portsmouth Naval Yard \(Boston, MA\)](#)

[Council Lobbies BRAC Panel \(Fayetteville, NC\)](#)

[Base Realignment And Closure: Why GF? \(Grand Forks, ND\)](#)

[Head of coalition says his group is marginalized \(Long Island, NY\)](#)

[Losses tallied in base closings \(ME\)](#)

[Two key military bases drawing BRAC comment \(New Bern, NC\)](#)

[Specter, Santorum, Rendell to argue for state's bases \(Philadelphia, PA\)](#)

[Covering all the bases \(ME\)](#)

[Base advocates ready their defenses \(Portland, ME\)](#)

[S.C. base to take young Air Force under wing of senior Air Guard \(Eastover, SC\)](#)

[BRAC chairman questions keeping Oceana open \(VA\)](#)

[DOD report challenges USAF plans for 130th \(Charleston, WV\)](#)

[Military base review panel questions need for Galena airfield \(AK\)](#)

[Practice and making BRAC more perfect \(Bangor, ME\)](#)

[Base Panel Letter Stirs Hope On Portsmouth \(Boston, MA\)](#)

[New London not on list of bases that could escape closure \(New London, CT\)](#)

[Some perspective offered on BRAC proposals to relocate \(St. Louis, MO\)](#)

[Pope AFB may yet face closure \(Raleigh, NC\)](#)

[Panel seeks more data on Maine bases \(Portland, ME\)](#)

[Cleveland officials encouraged by letter to defense secretary \(Cleveland, OH\)](#)

[Rep. Pearce: Research lab move could be costly \(White Sands Missile Range, NM\)](#)

[Shipyard's Fate Hangs In Balance Tomorrow \(NH\)](#)

Opinions/Editorials

[Base realignment equals confusion \(Joplin, MO\)](#)

[Sub base reckoning \(Norwich, CT\)](#)

[Navy School Ripe For Multi-Use Development \(Athens, GA\)](#)

[Governor, senators take NIMBY stand \(Reading, PA\)](#)

[Last chance to argue for Maine bases is July 6 \(Portland, ME\)](#)

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

BRAC commission to review more bases

Army Times
Gordon Trowbridge
July 1, 2005

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission announced Friday that it has added more than a dozen facilities to the list of those it wants to review.

The release of the list is a necessary first step for the panel to add any closings to those recommended by the Defense Department in May.

In past base-closing rounds, most installations on the "add list" have survived the process. But several of those on Friday's list were the subject of questions from the commissioners during May hearings.

Commissioners will vote July 19 on whether to add the bases to the list that eventually goes to Congress and President Bush for final approval. Release of the list — formally, a request to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for

additional information — is required before commissioners can visit the installations on fact-finding missions.

“This doesn’t mean we will add a base [to the Pentagon recommendations] in all instances,” said Robert McCreary, a spokesman for the commission. “We’re just asking for more information, for comparison reasons.”

Rules governing this round of closings make it more difficult than ever for commissioners to expand on the Pentagon’s recommendations. When the panel meets July 19, approval from seven of nine members are required to add a base to the closings list; in past rounds, only a majority was needed.

Also, two commissioners must visit any base recommended for addition, and another vote by at least seven members would be needed to add bases to the final list.

Among bases the commission wants to examine:

- Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, a regular topic of base-closings discussions. Marine officials told the commission in May they had considered consolidating recruit training elsewhere but ultimately dropped the idea; Friday’s list reopens that possibility.
- Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which Navy officials said they considered closing instead of Naval Shipyard Portsmouth, N.H. The Navy has said Pearl Harbor’s strategic position in the Pacific is key, but the commission wants to reexamine that decision, based on Navy data that rates Portsmouth as more efficient.
- Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine, which the Pentagon recommended for shrinking but not closing. The commission asked defense officials why the base shouldn’t close completely.
- The Navy’s Broadway Complex in downtown San Diego, which houses Navy Region Southwest’s headquarters. The commission’s list suggests closing the complex could boost security and give San Diego officials redevelopment options.

- The Navy’s Master Jet Base at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., which has been cited as a closing possibility by commissioners because of encroaching local development. The commission will examine the possibility of moving Oceana’s flight operations to Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., which the Air Force wants to close, or to Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

- Galena Airport Forward Operating Location, Alaska, one of two alert bases in Alaska for air-defense jets — which the commission may consider one two many.

- Pope Air Force Base, N.C., which is recommended to merge with neighboring Fort Bragg. The Pentagon’s plan would remove close-air support aircraft from Pope, a move the commission questioned.

- Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., planned to lose its aircraft but remain open, apparently as part of an Air Force plan to base unmanned aircraft there. The commission asked for more details on the possible UAV mission.

- Several Air National Guard locations that would close or lose their aircraft under the Pentagon’s plan. The commission is seeking information on whether those changes would damage homeland defense, and whether state National Guard officials were properly consulted.

- Several Defense Finance and Accounting Service offices recommended for merging. The commission has asked is the Pentagon’s merger plan is the most cost-effective option.

- The Naval Postgraduate School and Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., and the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio. Commissioners want to examine the possibility of merging defense graduate schools in one location.

According to a Government Accountability Office report released Friday, defense officials considered closing the military’s graduate

schools, a proposal rejected during the final days of the Pentagon's deliberations.

- Army, Navy and Air Force medical commands in the Washington, D.C., area, which the commission will consider merging at one location.

National News Articles

More Bases May Be Closed

Los Angeles Times
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON — Military bases in Hawaii and California are among several a commission is considering adding to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's list of proposed closures, the panel's chairman said Friday.

In a letter sent to the Pentagon, Chairman Anthony J. Principi identified additional bases the Base Realignment and Closure Commission may recommend closing, and sought explanations for why the Pentagon decided to leave those facilities open.

Specifically, the letter asks why the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and the Navy Broadway Complex, both in San Diego, and the U.S. Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, were not slated for closure.

It also questions the Pentagon's decisions to downsize, rather than close, the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine, Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina and Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

And, the letter asks for more explanation about the proposed reorganization of Air National Guard facilities across the country and the downsizing of several other small facilities.

In May, the Pentagon proposed closing or reducing forces at 62 major bases and hundreds of smaller installations to save money and streamline the services.

Dozens of other facilities would grow, absorbing troops from bases slated for closure or downsizing.

The law that authorized the first round of base closings in a decade required the Pentagon to answer such questions before the commission could recommend closing or downsizing a facility that wasn't on Rumsfeld's original list.

In another letter to members of Congress, Principi said, "Please be assured that the commission has not decided to close or realign any installations. We are in the early stages of a multistep process."

The commission will conduct a public hearing July 19 in Washington to decide whether bases left off the list should be added. It takes seven of nine votes to add a base. Other public hearings and base visits would follow.

Pentagon Is Asked To Justify Parts Of Base-Closing Plan

New York Times
Eric Schmitt
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON, July 1 - The independent commission assessing the Pentagon's proposed list of domestic base closings directed Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on Friday to justify more than a dozen of the recommendations, the first clear signal that the panel may alter some of the military's choices.

In one case, the panel asked the Pentagon to explain why it did not recommend closing the naval shipyard at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii even though it is less efficient and had a lower military value than the military's choice for closure, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine.

The commission's requests, contained in a seven-page letter from the panel chairman, Anthony J. Principi, came as federal investigators cautioned in a report issued on Friday that the Pentagon may have overstated

the plan's estimated savings of \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

The review of the Pentagon's proposal by the Government Accountability Office found that 80 percent of the Pentagon's projected savings from base closings and consolidations came from only 10 percent of the recommendations and that nearly half the projected savings were from cuts in military jobs that in many cases would simply be reassigned to other areas.

"This could create a false sense of savings available for other purposes," the report said.

Members of the commission have visited dozens of installations and held several public hearings in communities that are pulling out all the stops to persuade the commission to reverse the Pentagon's plans. The panel's request for more information resulted from questions raised in those visits and hearings, and from other public comments.

Mr. Principi, a former secretary of veterans affairs, said in May that the panel would not be "a rubber stamp" for the Defense Department. The four previous base-closing commissions endorsed 85 percent of the military's recommendations.

Lawmakers from some states that would suffer deep cuts under the Pentagon's plan, including Senator Olympia J. Snowe, Republican of Maine, said that the panel's challenge to the military's recommendations reinforced many of the arguments they have been making. The commission will hold a hearing in Boston on Wednesday, where the fate of the Maine shipyard will be the hot topic.

In a separate letter to Ms. Snowe, Mr. Principi warned that the panel was "inquiring, not deciding," and that his letter to Mr. Rumsfeld was simply a request for more information. When the commission meets on July 19, it will need the vote of seven of its nine members to add a base to the Pentagon's list for consideration. At least two commission members would then be required to visit the site and hold a public hearing.

At the panel's final deliberations, which are scheduled for the week of Aug. 22, at least seven members would have to vote to close one of the bases added to the list. The commission must submit its findings to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president and Congress have until Nov. 7 to reject or accept the entire package.

In addition to Portsmouth, the commission asked why the Pentagon did not recommend consolidating the Marine Corps' recruiting depots on the East and West Coasts, and why it did not suggest closing Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. It also asked the Pentagon to justify its decision to shrink, but not close, Grand Forks Air Base in North Dakota and why it did not consolidate the headquarters for the armed services' surgeons general at a new national medical center in Bethesda, Md.

The Government Accountability Office report found that the cost to carry out the proposed closures and consolidations in this round alone was \$24.4 billion, compared with a total of \$22 billion for the four previous rounds combined, as of 2001. This increase was due largely to the proposed cost of building new housing for troops returning from Europe (\$2.3 billion) and the expense of building new facilities (\$1.3 billion) for personnel who would move out of leased space, much of it in the Washington area that was deemed to be vulnerable to terrorist attack.

The report said that 22 percent of the recommendations would not yield savings within six years and a handful would produce no savings. The investigators said that savings could be difficult to track, and urged Mr. Rumsfeld to establish mechanisms to monitor savings estimates.

A Pentagon spokesman, Glenn Flood, said officials there were pleased with the G.A.O.'s report, and would supply the requested information before the July 19 hearing.

GAO Questions Base-Closure Savings
Philadelphia Inquirer

Liz Sidoti
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon says it will save \$49 billion over 20 years by streamlining services across the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and shutting down bases deemed inefficient.

But yesterday, the Government Accountability Office released a report that found upfront costs will total \$24 billion and questioned the Pentagon's projected savings.

"We believe the recommendations overall, if approved, would produce savings," the report said. However, it added, "there are clear limitations associated with the projected savings, such as the lack of military end-strength reductions and uncertainties associated with other savings estimates."

The report said eliminating jobs held by military personnel would make up about half of the annual recurring savings. However, the report said much of that money won't be available for other uses because the jobs - and salaries - simply will be relocating to other areas.

"Without recognition that these are not dollar savings that can be readily applied elsewhere, this could create a false sense of savings available for other purposes," the report said.

In a letter sent yesterday to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, the chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, Anthony Principi, identified additional bases the commission may recommend closing. The commission, which was established by Congress, also seeks explanations for why the Pentagon decided to leave those facilities open.

And the letter asks for more explanation about the proposed reorganization of Air National Guard facilities across the country and the downsizing of several other small facilities.

In May, the Pentagon proposed closing or reducing forces at 62 major bases and hundreds

of smaller installations to save money and streamline the services. Dozens of other facilities would grow, absorbing troops from domestic and overseas bases slated for closure or downsizing.

The proposal targets the Willow Grove Naval Air Station outside Philadelphia and the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station for closure, putting about 1,600 jobs at stake. In New Jersey, the base at Fort Monmouth would close, imperiling about 2,200 jobs.

The law that authorized the first round of base closings in a decade requires the Pentagon to answer such questions before the commission can recommend closing or downsizing a facility that wasn't on Rumsfeld's original list.

The commission must send its revised list to the president in September. He must approve it in its entirety or send it back to the commission for more work. Once the president signs off on it, the list goes to Congress, which must accept it or reject it as a whole.

Air Guard Feels Slighted By Air Force "Reasonable people may disagree"

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Harry Levins
July 2, 2005

The new round of military base closings may be stirring up a civil war in which both sides wear blue - the Air National Guard on one side, and the Air Force and Air Force Reserve on the other.

On Thursday, seven Air National Guard generals appeared in Atlanta before a panel from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The seven pressed home their charge that the Air Force's recommendations for base closings had sandbagged the Air Guard.

In all, 28 of the 88 Air Guard bases with flying missions would be stripped of their airplanes. Among those bases is Lambert Field, home of the Missouri Air Guard's 131st Fighter Wing, with its F-15 Eagle fighters.

As the Air Guard complained in Atlanta, the Air Force fired back in Washington. That service called a telephonic news conference with an active-duty general, an Air Force Reserve general - and nobody from the Air National Guard.

"We invited the Air National Guard, and they elected not to respond," said Air Force spokeswoman Shirley Carey.

For the news conference, the active Air Force representative was Maj. Gen. Gary W. Heckman, co-chairman of the group that drew up the Air Force's list of bases it wants closed or downsized.

Heckman was asked whether the dispute with the Air Guard amounted to a civil war. He replied, "We realized that there would be some controversy. But we had to base our analysis on war-fighting ability." Heckman's bottom line: "Reasonable people may disagree."

The Air Guard has charged that stripping the 28 bases of their planes would have harmful consequences. Among them:

Holes in the air defense of America.

The loss of highly skilled Air Guard people reluctant to move along with the planes.

Problems in recruiting new Air Guard members.

On June 20, a subpanel of the base-closing commission heard testimony in St. Louis from the 131st's commander, Col. Mike Brandt. He said that stripping Lambert of its F-15s would also strip six metro areas of cover from Eagles, the most advanced U.S. fighter.

Brandt said then that his Eagles could cover a swath of the central United States with such high-value targets as locks, bridges, factories and the nation's only uranium enrichment plant, in Paducah, Ky.

On Thursday, the Air Force's Heckman steered clear of specifics on air defense. But he said the

Air Force had cleared its closed list with the U.S. Northern Command, which handles homeland military defense. "And NorthCom was quite satisfied," he said.

Issue in Overland

A flap of a different sort has arisen here with word that the commanding general of an Army Reserve unit says unionized workers at his St. Louis office are too expensive and unresponsive.

The unit is the Army Reserve's Human Resources Command, which employs about 2,000 people along Page Avenue in Overland. Under the Pentagon's proposal for closure and realignment, the command would move to Fort Knox, Ky., merging three offices - the one here and others in Alexandria, Va., and Indianapolis.

Now, KSDK-TV (Channel 5) is reporting that the command's top officer - Maj. Gen. Dorian Anderson of the Alexandria office - has said in an e-mail that getting rid of the operation here would help the command to install a new culture.

A spokeswoman at the Overland office referred questions to Anderson's spokesman in Alexandria, Lt. Col. Kevin Arata. Although Arata returned a reporter's call several times, the reporter's phone was tied up with the Washington news conference. Arata could not be reached later.

At the hearing in St. Louis on June 20, Missourians led by Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond said they favored merging the command's three offices - but in Overland, not at Fort Knox.

On Sept. 8, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will finish studying the Pentagon's list and submit its own list to President George W. Bush.

The Losers Cry Foul Over Military Cuts
Providence Journal-Bulletin
July 3, 2005

"Part of the difficulty is that the world changes in ways we can't predict," says Senator Reed.

By John E. Mulligan, Journal Washington Bureau

In the background of the Pentagon's plan to close 33 major bases and save up to \$50 billion over the next 20 years lurks the question: has New England been unfairly singled out for disarmament?

If the answer is a resounding "Yes" to the laid-off welder at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, in Kittery, Maine, or to the brain trust of undersea warfare at Naval Submarine Base New London, in Groton, Conn., a survey of military experts and historians answers: "Not necessarily."

The Base Realignment And Closing Commission, BRAC, brings the debate to Boston Wednesday in a hearing on proposed reductions in New England's military structure to levels unseen since before World War II.

U.S. Sen. Jack Reed is among those who will address the panel.

"We'll always have second thoughts about the actions we take with our military structure, even if we do it with careful deliberation," said Reed, a member of the Armed Services Committee, whose first career was as an Army officer, and who generally considers the base-closing machinery to be about as sound and as free from political mischief as it can get.

"Part of the difficulty is that the world changes in ways we can't predict," he said.

THOMAS G. MAHNKEN, a professor at the Naval War College, in Newport, and at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, in Washington, D.C., echoed Reed in a recent interview.

"Clearly New England has taken a big hit for a whole host of reasons, each of which in isolation made a fair amount of sense," Mahnken said. After the Cold War, "we certainly didn't need the SAC [Strategic Air Command] bases," he

said, referring to the Air Force installations in Northern New England that once helped to deter the Soviet threat with long-range, nuclear-armed bombers.

The Navy's reconfiguration, with an increasing focus on the Pacific, "seems to be the correct response to military needs that are shifting to the Persian Gulf and perhaps Asia," he said.

"But my concern," Mahnken said, "is that all of this weakens the bond between the local area and the national defense. We are entering the early phases of a protracted war on terrorism that may go on for decades. It's important for people of every region to see the military, to be around the military, to have some exposure to the military."

According to Loren Thompson, a military analyst at the Lexington Institute, a Washington-area think tank that specializes in military issues, "New England has been disproportionately targeted" for base closings. But it hasn't been for political reasons, he said.

"The military has basically followed the private sector out of New England," he said, referring to the mills and factories that began to migrate decades ago.

It's no coincidence that the only region without an oil refinery or a major automobile assembly plant is also losing its purchase on the military, Thompson said, and for some of the same reasons: the high cost of labor, energy and other business necessities.

A SINGLE MOMENT dominates New England's military history since World War II. It came on April 17, 1973, when Elliot L. Richardson, the Boston Brahmin who was President Richard M. Nixon's defense secretary, announced the transfer of Newport's cruiser-destroyer force to Southern ports and the shutdown of the carrier base, the Naval air station and other facilities at Quonset Point.

According to a Journal story in 1983, the aggregate impact of the Richardson announcement was a loss of almost 30,000 Navy

jobs in Rhode Island, with the biggest losses coming from the reassignment of 39 Navy ships to other ports.

(The size of the loss across the region varies from report to report. For example, the Navy in 1970 counted sailors as part of its Rhode Island work force. The Department of Defense, in its latest "base structure report," does not include personnel on "float status.")

In all the military base-closing efforts since the major cuts in the 1970s, New England has lost fewer than 10,000 additional jobs. If all of this year's proposed cutbacks and shutdowns take force, roughly another 15,000 jobs would be lost, most in three places: the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the submarine base in Groton and the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine, which is slated for sharp cutbacks.

Naval forces surged in and out of Narragansett Bay during the 20th century on powerful tides of military need -- and politics. "We built up this huge infrastructure for the obvious reason," said Reed. "We were fighting in Europe."

Thus when the United States entered World War I, the Army built "huge arsenals" in the Northeast to direct the flow of materiel to Europe by sea, Reed said, and dotted the region with forts and recruiting stations to feed the great embarkation point at Fort Dix, N.J.

The Naval War College and other outposts of what The Journal, in 1983, called "the cerebral Navy" gave way to vastly expanded facilities for the training of sailors to man the fleet bound for Europe.

Demobilization after the armistice was swift, complete -- and soon regretted when war broke out again in Europe.

Even before Pearl Harbor, Rhode Island's 69-year-old freshman Democratic senator, Theodore Francis Green, maneuvered a great prize into Narragansett Bay: the Quonset Point complex.

THE BOOM-AND-BUST cycles recurred after World War II and Korea, and Rhode Island's naval fortunes rose again -- briefly -- under President John F. Kennedy, with Aquidneck Island's selection as a future ballistic-missile submarine base.

"The Cold War was very good for business in the North Atlantic," analyst Thompson said. He referred not only to the antisubmarine patrols staged from the sub base in Groton, the Narragansett Bay establishment, and a specialized squadron at Brunswick Naval Air Station, but also to the new Strategic Air Command bombers at Loring Air Force Base in far northeastern Maine and the air-refueling mission at Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire.

But the wartime economics of the Vietnam era forced belt-tightening at a moment when the Navy on the Bay most needed modernization. For example, Quonset Point's airstrips were too short for modern jets, its berths too shallow, without expensive dredging, for modern carriers.

But Quonset Point never got the expensive facelift that might have put it on a more competitive footing with other naval bases.

In the regional competition for defense dollars, New England's increasingly antiwar congressional delegation was no match for Southerners such as Sen. John Stennis, D-Miss., an influential member on defense matters.

The great naval contraction of the mid-1970s in New England temporarily answered much of the need for base-closing. It may also have contributed to a groundswell of congressional resistance to base closings nationwide.

Daniel Else, a specialist in base-closing issues at the Congressional Research Service, said the trend began with a rash of maneuvers to delay, or refuse financing for, base closings as soon as they were proposed. It culminated in the late 1970s with President Jimmy Carter's signing of a bill that effectively blocked all major base closings for more than a decade -- despite what

was widely conceded to be a large supply of excess military capacity.

A top defense official under President George H.W. Bush finally devised a solution that, in somewhat altered form, became the system through four rounds of the process, from 1988 to 1995. The new round of closings announced in the spring uses the same method.

ESSENTIALLY, the BRAC machinery lets the service chiefs and the Pentagon leadership decide how to tailor the base structure to the priorities of the military.

Then an independent commission is charged with reviewing the target list of shifts, cutbacks and closings -- and with making the changes it deems wise.

The final list goes next to the president and finally to the Congress, but neither has the power to alter it. They can accept the entire base-closing plan or reject it -- nothing in between.

"This seems to have worked very well in insulating these decisions inside the Defense Department and inside the independent commission of extremely well-qualified and strong-willed commissioners," said Else, of the Congressional Research Service.

"The system is probably pretty darned good," he said.

New England's base-closings have not been wildly out of line with changing military needs; nobody foresees war in Europe or Russian submarines in the Northwest Atlantic.

Reed has expressed skepticism about the idea the base closings were arranged to help states that President Bush carried in last year's election, while hurting those carried by the Democratic candidate, Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass.

In the aggregate, "blue" Kerry states stand to lose more jobs under the new plan than "red" Bush states. But Reed and others cite examples

of proposed closures that run counter to that surface pattern.

The proposed shutdown of Ellsworth Air Force Base, for instance, represents the second biggest employer in South Dakota, a strong "red" state where conservative Republican John Thune upset Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle last year, in part by promising to save the base.

Any partisan base-closing theory would also have to account for major shutdowns that would hurt one "red" state and help another. Fort McPherson, in Georgia, is one of the biggest projected Army shutdowns, with Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, slated to gain at Georgia's expense, Reed noted.

Else said the real story of the latest round of base closings is not in regional trends but in the military's stress on "joint" operations among all the services and its difficult effort to predict the needs of a decade or two from now and restructure the bases accordingly.

"It's a gigantic three-dimensional chess game," Else said. In such militarily rich states as Virginia and Texas, the latest round features complex crosscurrents of change that will affect dozens of bases and thousands of personnel across the services.

But outside the affected communities, the shifts attract little mainstream attention because they do not greatly alter the state's overall military complement.

In Rhode Island, the Navy's highly specialized labs-and-classrooms complex around Newport has experienced a modest boom since the late 1980s. Quietly supporting a humming private defense economy is the Naval Undersea Warfare Center -- electronic descendant of the Navy torpedo factory on Goat Island that ran 24 hours a day and employed 13,000 at the height of World War II.

Some experts, including Thompson, of the Lexington Institute, fear that a similar relationship between the Navy and private

enterprise could be damaged if the base in Groton is closed.

"Closing the sub base is probably penny-wise and pound foolish. It's part of the largest concentration of knowledge about underwater engineering and warfare in the world," he said.

"We don't know what the future holds. If you can't know for sure, you try to eliminate only the things that aren't unique," Thompson said, referring to the submarine establishment.

As Base Closings Loom, US Gives Grants For Transition Plans

Lawmakers vow campaign to keep installations open

Boston Globe
Alan Wirzbicki
July 3, 2005

WASHINGTON -- While New England lawmakers continue to battle plans to close several large military bases in the region, the federal government started providing money to the states to plan how they would help thousands of affected civilian workers if efforts to save the bases fail.

The US Department of Labor announced a series of grants last week totaling \$28 million for state agencies to begin studying the potential consequences of base closings. Some state officials say leaving thousands of highly trained workers unemployed would wound the regional economy.

In a statement, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao said the grants were intended to "help communities develop their transition plans," but that the grants would have no impact on the final recommendations of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). Lawmakers welcomed the funding but said the money wouldn't affect their campaigns against the closures.

The commission chairman on Friday indicated that the panel is considering overturning the Pentagon's proposal to close Portsmouth Naval

Shipyard, because the facility in Kittery, Maine, is more efficient than a shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

New England labor officials say losing the bases would be a major blow to the economy, and that they needed to start planning now for that possibility. Michael Power, the head of the New Hampshire Workforce Opportunity Council, said that the impact of civilian job losses if Portsmouth Naval Shipyard closes would surpass any layoffs in the state in recent years.

"Certainly this would be the largest one we've seen in memory," Power said. Federal and state officials described the grants as unprecedented, because the Department of Labor usually only provides emergency funds to states after layoffs have already happened.

The planning grants announced Tuesday included \$1 million each for Connecticut and Massachusetts, and \$1,273,628 for Maine. New Hampshire, where about 1,900 Portsmouth shipyard employees live, will receive about \$275,000 of the funds included in the Maine grant.

According to the Defense Department, Maine is expected to lose more than 4,000 civilian jobs at three military facilities, more than any other state. State officials estimate that the overall toll, including indirect job losses, will be around 12,000 jobs.

Connecticut will lose more than 1,000 civilian jobs, almost all of them at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Conn., unless BRAC removes the base from its final list.

Massachusetts is expected to gain overall, but many workers at Otis Air Force Base will lose their jobs.

Maine's commissioner of labor, Laura Fortman, said the state needed to get a head start on preparing for the worst-case scenario.

"We applied for this grant to help us look at coordinating some of the services that might be necessary if we are not successful at getting

these facilities off the list," Fortman said, stressing that the base closures would have a ripple effect across the whole state.

The Labor Department's guidelines leave it up to the states how to spend the money, as long as the funds aren't used to lobby against the base closures. State officials said the federal money will help pay for studies of the local workforce that would be affected by closures and will help determine what training opportunities the state will need to provide if the bases close.

In the meantime, state officials are gearing up for a meeting with BRAC commissioners July 6 in Boston, where they will have the chance to argue against closures. The commissioners can modify the Defense Department's list, which they will submit to President Bush in September. If the White House approves the plan, it will go to Congress, which can reject or approve the list but not make any changes.

Joseph M. Donovan, a spokesman for the executive office of economic development in Massachusetts, said that while the state "appreciated" the funding, Governor Romney "remains focused on the preservation and enhancement" of bases in Massachusetts.

Donovan said he didn't know how Massachusetts planned to use the grant money.

The Department of Labor program, designated phase I, may be followed by more federal grants if bases remain on the closure list.

A spokesman for Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell did not return calls.

GAO Questions Sub Base Decision Report: Uncertainty regarding projected size of submarine force should be key consideration

New London Day (New London, CT)

Robert A. Hamilton

June 2, 2005

Groton — A new report by an investigative arm of Congress says the Pentagon plan to close the

Naval Submarine Base in Groton deserves special scrutiny because it assumes a smaller submarine fleet than has been authorized and it might disrupt submarine training.

The report by the Government Accountability Office also said interviews with officials at the base confirmed that the Navy could realize some personnel savings from closing the Groton base, and it stops short of saying the Navy shouldn't be allowed to proceed with the plan.

"There's good news and there's bad news," said John C. Markowicz, chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition, which is working to overturn the Pentagon recommendation. Markowicz said late Friday he was still trying to digest the 273-page report released that morning.

But he said he appreciates the ammunition that the report hands a team that is preparing for a hearing by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission in Boston on Wednesday, when they have an opportunity to argue against closing the base.

The commission must develop a final base closure list by Sept. 8.

The GAO report notes that the Navy's base realignment and closure report projects the fleet will be at 341 to 370 ships in 2024, while it's 30-year shipbuilding plan puts the number at 314. In addition, there are widely conflicting projections about the size of the submarine force.

"While the recommendations to close (the Groton base) ... and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Maine, project significant savings, both are based on projected decreases in the number of submarines in the future force structure," the GAO report states. "However ... there is uncertainty over the number of submarines and surface ships required for the future force."

If the Navy ends up with more submarines than it is projecting, then it might have to keep the Groton base open to have a sufficient number of berths, critics of the Navy plan contend.

In addition, the GAO report questions whether the Navy adequately accounted for a key part of its plan, which would involve moving the Naval Submarine School to Kings Bay, Ga.

“In our discussions with officials at (Groton), we found while the Navy's BRAC cost and savings analysis includes one-time costs to move the specialized equipment associated with the submarine school, the Navy analysis does not appear to have included an assessment of the time it would take to pack, move, and unpack the equipment, and the potential impact on the training pipeline and the certification of crews for submarines,” the report states.

“The BRAC Commission may want to assure itself that the Navy has developed a transition plan to satisfy the training and certification requirements until the receiving sites are able to perform this training, without unduly interrupting the training pipeline,” the report states.

Markowicz said the Navy appears to have gone on the offensive on that issue, with a top official sending a letter to the commission saying that concern is overblown, but even that letter contains little detail about the moving plan, he said.

“It basically says, ‘Trust us, we can do it,’” Markowicz said.

Markowicz said it was discouraging that the GAO did not dig deeper into Navy estimates that it can eliminate about 80 percent of the civilian positions in Groton by consolidating operations in Norfolk, Va., and Kings Bay, an estimate he contends is inflated.

The report only said that GAO analysts met with officials at the Groton base who agreed with the estimates.

“I'd love to know who agreed to that number,” Markowicz said. “And even if it's true, what does that tell you? That they're overstaffed at Norfolk and Kings Bay. It doesn't say that, you have to kind of back into it, but that's the only conclusion you can draw.”

Thune challenges past GAO actions

Argus Leader
Peter Harriman
July 04, 2005

Technical difficulties have indefinitely delayed today's scheduled release of data explaining why defense officials recommended closing Ellsworth Air Force Base and 32 other major U.S. military installations.

"One of the problems we've been having is, we've been dealing with hundreds of thousands of pages of information," said Pentagon spokeswoman Cheryl Irwin. "Not a couple thousand - I mean hundreds of thousands of pages."

Irwin said the agency will make the data available for public review "as soon as we can."

But the Pentagon did begin posting other base-closure information on its Web site Friday night. That includes what the Pentagon told bases about how it planned to collect relevant data, along with minutes of Pentagon meetings about the base-closure process.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said Air Force officials have told him the slow pace of releasing information is because it might be possible to extrapolate from some of its shortcomings in the nation's defense.

"It's an analysis of our greatest vulnerabilities," Thune said Friday during a meeting with the Argus Leader editorial board.

Members of Congress and their staff members with security clearance were given the go-ahead early this week to look at information that is still classified. Neither Thune nor Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., has done so yet.

Both senators say that, because they wouldn't be able to share what they have seen with anyone who lacks security clearance, reviewing the data would be useless in the effort to save Ellsworth.

Johnson said the Defense Department needs to follow through on its promise to make the remaining information available.

"The delays to this point have been unreasonable," he said. "We need this data to prepare for June 21."

The federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which will review the Pentagon recommendations, has scheduled a field hearing in Rapid City that day.

The Ellsworth Task Force will try to convince commissioners that the Defense Department deviated from its criteria for deciding which bases to close.

But without the classified information to give insight into Pentagon officials' thinking about base closures, "we do not have enough data to put together our arguments," Thune said. "We really do need to know the top-line numbers."

He said supporters will focus their arguments on the base's military value.

"We have to convince BRAC there's a reason to keep that base," Thune said.

The economic hardship the Rapid City area might suffer if the base closes "is part of the argument, but it's not the first point."

On Friday, Thune wrote to Comptroller General David Walker and asked the General Accounting Office to reconcile an apparent discrepancy between the Pentagon's decision to close Ellsworth and consolidate the nation's B-1 bomber fleet at a Texas Air Force base and the discussion surrounding the 1995 round of base closures.

In that round, Air Force officials said there would be problems with moving the bomber fleet to Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas.

The GAO has responsibility for reviewing the Pentagon's base-closure recommendations and reporting to Congress.

In his letter, Thune noted that in 1995, the GAO had reported to Congress that in discussions regarding Ellsworth, concerns were raised about overloading Dyess and placing all B-1s at a single location.

"You may wish to explore whether the concerns brought up by the Air Force in 1995 were adequately addressed in this BRAC round and why they would not be just as valid today," Thune wrote.

He told the Argus Leader board, though, that Air Force officials have told him the concerns about grouping the entire B-1 fleet on one base were greater 10 years ago when the Air Force feared a nuclear attack from a superpower.

Thune acknowledged that Ellsworth proponents face a steep challenge as they fight to save the base.

"It's fair to say, based on history, you'll see 15 percent, maybe less, come off the (base-closure) list," he said. "No more than four of the 33."

Review questions Pentagon's base closure cost savings estimates

GovExec.com

Daniel Pulliam

July 01, 2005

Congressional auditors found in a report released Friday that the Defense Department's process for deciding which military bases to shutter was "logical, reasoned and well-documented," but questioned some of the Pentagon's cost savings estimates.

The Government Accountability Office review of the Pentagon's base realignment and closure process, mandated by law, concluded that Defense officials had varying success in achieving their 2005 BRAC goals of reducing surplus infrastructure to create savings, furthering the department's transformation and encouraging greater cooperation among the military services.

The 273-page report (GAO-05-785) raised some questions about Defense's projection of \$50 billion in savings from this BRAC round, noting that the closure and realignment process requires an upfront investment of an estimated \$24 billion.

"While we believe [the Defense Department's] overall recommendations, if approved and implemented, would produce savings, there are clear limitations associated with the projected savings," the report states.

Much of the savings would result from the elimination of jobs held by military service personnel. But Defense officials have said people in these positions will be reassigned to other positions. "Without recognition that these are not dollar savings that can be readily applied elsewhere, GAO noted, "this could create a false sense of savings available for other purposes."

GAO auditors also expressed "heightened" concern about savings projections resulting from the transformation of business processes at Defense, due to "past tendencies to reduce related operating budgets in advance of actual savings being known and fully realized."

"We found that the concept of transformation is not well-defined," the report stated.

GAO recommended, and the Pentagon agreed, that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld develop a method for tracking and updating savings estimates as the BRAC recommendations are implemented.

Since the report was due by law July 1, the Defense Department did not have a chance to formally respond to it. Pentagon spokesman Glenn Flood said such a reply will be sent within two weeks.

In May, Rumsfeld unveiled a list of 222 BRAC recommendations, including 837 closures and realignments. The GAO report will be used by the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission in completing its review of Rumsfeld's recommendations and putting together the final BRAC list.

Those recommendations will be submitted to President Bush Sept. 8 and he must approve or disapprove them by Sept. 23. Congress then must either reject the list or allow it to become official within 45 days of presidential endorsement.

Emotions aside, base proponents will talk numbers in Boston

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
Tim McCahill
July 4, 2005

For all the emotion sparked by the Pentagon's recommendation to close or realign three northern New England military installations, the argument for keeping them open may boil down to cold, hard numbers.

On Wednesday, Maine and New Hampshire officials will make their case for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Brunswick Naval Air Station and the Defense Finance Accounting Service center in northern Maine to the panel reviewing the Pentagon's hit list.

Expected to figure heavily in the pitch to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission is how the Department of Defense overlooked the value of each installation, and how much more it would cost to shutter or change them instead of maintaining the status quo.

Here are points likely to be raised at Wednesday's hearing in Boston:

PORTSMOUTH

- The numbers: Employs over 4,000 civilian workers from Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts; pumps more than \$250 million into the economies in Maine and New Hampshire.

The Department of Defense says closing the nation's oldest federal shipyard would save \$1.3 billion over 20 years. Maine and New Hampshire officials dispute that number; New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch said last week that

the impact of closing Portsmouth could be as much as 10 times what the Pentagon estimates.

"I really do believe that the Department of Defense came to a mistaken recommendation based on erroneous data and incomplete analysis," Lynch said.

The yard's supporters also argue the Pentagon has underestimated by millions of dollars the savings from doing work at Portsmouth rather than shipyards elsewhere.

Members of the Maine and New Hampshire congressional delegations said last week they "will use the shipyard's outstanding reputation for finishing work on time and under budget as concrete and tangible evidence for why the shipyard should not be closed."

BRUNSWICK

- The numbers: More than 4,000 active duty and reserve personnel and 720 civilians are based at Brunswick. Stands to lose 2,420 people under the realignment.

The Brunswick Naval Air Station would remain open, but all of its P-3 Orion patrol aircraft and C-130 Hercules transports, along with half of its military personnel, would be transferred to Jacksonville, Fla.

The Navy initially considered mothballing the coastal base for possible future, but federal law bars the military from deactivating a base without selling or leasing the property.

Maine officials point to the more than \$100 million spent on improvements at Brunswick over the past four years, including building a new control tower and a six-bay hangar. Unlike Jacksonville, Brunswick already has a hangar designed for the patrol plane that will replace P-3 Orions.

Brunswick's supporters also argue Jacksonville doesn't have the infrastructure to support the flood of planes and personnel, forcing the Pentagon to spend, not save, money.

LIMESTONE

- The numbers: Employs 353 people.

Established to ease the impact of the 1994 shutdown of Loring Air Force Base, the Defense Finance Accounting Service center is one 23 targeted for closure across the country. The Pentagon wants to consolidate its civilian payroll operations at three locations: Columbus, Ohio; Denver; and Indianapolis.

Backers want to expand the small Limestone center, whose good-paying jobs are important for the economy in northernmost Maine.

Despite being rural, officials say the area has a large pool of potential workers. Demand for the jobs is so great that vacancies fill in 9.2 days, on average - the fastest time in the entire defense accounting system.

New England states prepare for critical base closing hearing

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
Lolita C. Baldor
July 2, 2005

Armed with charts, video presentations, hired consultants and military experts, New England lawmakers are gearing up to persuade an independent commission that the region's Navy, Army and Air Force bases are worth keeping open.

The key forum will be a hearing Wednesday before four members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which will spend the day in Boston to take testimony on an issue that could drastically change the landscape of the military presence in New England.

Lawmakers and defense analysts consider it a longshot at being able to reverse the recent proposed realignment, which could cost New England three bases and nearly half of the jobs to be lost through base closures nationwide. But at least one base could have a chance of being saved: the submarine base in Groton, Conn.

"It is a very critical moment. It is the day when you arrive in court and lay before the judge the elements and facts of the case," said Robert Gilcash, military analyst with McKenna Long Aldridge in Washington. "Make no mistake, it's showtime."

The main argument, lawmakers say, will be their bases' military value - a key component considered by the Pentagon in deciding what bases should be on the list. Officials have questioned the Pentagon's scoring, including what military assets were included and how much each was worth.

"We're going to heavily focus on military value," said Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn. "Even if they reconstruct the submarine base brick by brick, they're not going to be able to reconstruct a long list of other assets there that have to do with the unique technology at Electric Boat, the submarine school, the maintenance there. And once you tear down the place, you can't rebuild it again."

At Wednesday's hearing, officials from Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine will each get two hours to make a presentation to the commission, while Massachusetts will get one hour, and Rhode Island - which escaped nearly unscathed - will get 30 minutes.

Besides the Groton sub base, also on the chopping block are the Portsmouth Naval Station in Kittery, Maine, and Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. They're among 33 major bases nationwide targeted for shutdown by the Defense Department in this fifth and latest round of base closings.

It will be Connecticut's second struggle to get the Groton base off a closure list. They were successful in 1993, and may be able to repeat that success this year considering the skepticism expressed by some BRAC members about the plan.

"I think the community has a very good chance of convincing the commission that a mistake was made," said Loren Thompson, defense analyst with the Washington-base Lexington

Institute. "I think that the plan the Navy has proposed for moving the functions of the submarine yard is not credible."

Gilcash said commission staff are very concerned about the severity of the impact of the Groton closing, and are asking a lot of questions.

Thompson said much of the nation's skills in undersea warfare are concentrated in the Groton area - including submarine builder Electric Boat and the submarine school.

"You only need a straight majority of the commission in order to take a base off the list," said Thompson. "And this commission is composed of self-assured people who are real experts and don't mind telling the Pentagon, 'Sorry, you've got this wrong.'"

In contrast, he said, the Portsmouth base probably can't be saved because the submarine repair work done there can be moved. He also said it will be difficult to change Pentagon recommendations on Air Guard bases such as Otis, because they are part of a national strategy that the BRAC may not be willing to challenge.

But recent comments from the Coast Guard and BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi suggest there is some hope for both.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last week, Principi asked for more information on why the Pentagon chose to close Portsmouth rather than the Pearl Harbor shipyard.

Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, took that as a positive sign, saying it will give a boost to the state's arguments that Portsmouth is the most efficient shipyard, and shifting work to the other three yards will create backlogs and hurt Naval operations.

But she said it won't be easy.

"It's hard to get into their heads," she said. "We just have to make sure that we're giving them all the data, and where the Defense Department has

deviated from the criteria, and hope the commission agrees."

Meanwhile, Coast Guard officials last week challenged the Pentagon's decision to close Otis Air Guard base, warning that moving the fighters and personnel will dramatically increase costs for the Coast Guard, which shares space at the Massachusetts Military Reservation on the Cape.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said Otis - where the first fighters were launched in response to the Sept. 11 attacks - is critical to the defense of the entire region. Kennedy, who met with Coast Guard Commander Adm. Thomas H. Collins, said closing Otis would shift at least \$17 million in annual costs to the Coast Guard, possibly forcing the guard to move - undercutting rescues and security in the area.

Members of Congress from New England have been meeting regularly to hone their presentations and pour over the documents for weaknesses in the Pentagon's arguments.

"The stakes of failing are so high," said Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn. "Not only for the communities, but for the nation and national security."

Questions about Air National Guard units raises hope Ohio unit could survive

Gannett News Service

Greg Wright

July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON -- A base closure panel said Friday it wants the Pentagon to provide more information on the proposed closure or restructuring of Air National Guard units, encouraging Ohio officials who are trying to keep the 179th Airlift Wing in Mansfield alive.

"I think our hopes are much higher than they have been in the last month and half," said Mike Greene, co-chairman of a group in Ohio's Richland County that is pressing to keep the 179th open.

The Pentagon in May said it wants to close the 179th and move its eight C-130H transport planes to bases in Arkansas and Alabama. But local officials and lawmakers such as Rep. Michael Oxley, R-Findlay, objected, saying the region's economy would suffer because the base supports more than 1,000 jobs.

The independent Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission is reviewing the Pentagon recommendations. The nine-member commission will come up with a final base closure and realignment tally by Sept. 8 and could remove some bases on the original Pentagon list.

The commission on Friday also announced it has added more than a dozen facilities to the list of those it wants to review. The release of the list is a necessary first step for the panel to add any closings to those recommended by the Pentagon in May.

Facilities the commission wants to know more about include Air National Guard units. In a letter sent to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the commission asked whether state governors and state adjutant generals were consulted about plans to close or realign the facilities.

The commission also wants to know if Air National Guard changes could hamper homeland defense and homeland security missions.

The fact that the commission is asking such questions is encouraging, Oxley and Greene said. During a BRAC meeting on Monday in Buffalo, Oxley and Ohio officials argued that closing the 179th could hurt Air National Guard recruitment in north central Ohio.

Falling recruitment in turn would threaten national security, military experts say.

"This was one of the issues that Congressman Oxley raised in his testimony in front of the BRAC commissioners in Buffalo on Monday," Oxley's spokesman Tim Johnson said via e-mail. "It's a reason why Mr. Oxley feels the original

recommendation to disband the 179th Airlift Wing was flawed."

John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, a defense analysis firm, said Mansfield folks should be cautiously optimistic.

"I don't know if it is a significant improvement, but I would say it is at least a possibility," Pike said when asked whether the commission questions indicate they are leaning toward not closing or restructuring some Air National Guard units.

The commission decided to ask the questions partly because of what they have heard in regional meetings like the one in Buffalo, Commission Chairman Anthony Principi said in a July 1 letter to congressional members.

Principi noted that the commission has not finished its review work and has not decided to close or realign any facilities. "They are just looking for more information," BRAC spokesman Robert McCreary said.

Army may have overstated cost savings of base closures

Gannett News Service
Ledyard King
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON -- Government auditors say the Army might have significantly underestimated the costs to taxpayers of Pentagon plans to reshuffle military operations nationwide.

The report, issued Friday by the Government Accountability Office, also warns that some communities whose local bases would grow under the plan might not have the schools, housing and other programs to handle a surge of new personnel. That could force delays, which would increase costs and might require "substantial" federal assistance not included in Pentagon projections, the report said.

GAO auditors do not mention Fort Monmouth in raising these issues. But Monmouth's boosters have voiced those same arguments in trying to

shoot down the Army's logic for closing the New Jersey base and moving most of its operations and thousands of workers to Aberdeen Proving Ground, located in an outlying suburb of Baltimore.

"What it's essentially saying is that there's really no savings from closing (Monmouth) because they would have to reconstruct the fort at another location," Rep. Frank Pallone, D-Long Branch, said Friday after touring the Aberdeen base. "Because you'd have to build new buildings, it's actually going to cost you more."

Monmouth is one of about 180 installations -- and the largest Army base -- to be slated for closure. The Pentagon estimates it would mean the loss in New Jersey of nearly 10,000 jobs -- 5,272 base employees and military personnel and 4,465 workers who benefit from the base.

The fort's supporters are hoping to convince the Base Realignment and Closure commission reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations that Monmouth should stay open chiefly because its closure could disrupt the flow of lifesaving technology to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The panel, which is holding a hearing in Baltimore on July 8 on Monmouth and other bases, has until early September to make revisions before sending its final recommendations to President Bush.

In addition to closing Monmouth, the Army plan calls for adding 693 jobs at Picatinny Arsenal and turning the Morris County base into the Army's primary research and testing site for weapons and armaments. It also proposes adding 353 jobs to Fort Dix by consolidating several Army reserve centers, including Kilmer Army Reserve Center in Edison, at the South Jersey base.

The GAO report did not make recommendations on those proposals, either. But it did say the Army "generally followed" the framework laid out by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in making its recommendations.

The Pentagon contends moving Fort Monmouth jobs to Aberdeen would not only save money (\$1 billion over 20 years) but also provide more space to test equipment. Fort Monmouth is 1,100 acres compared with Aberdeen, which has more than 5,000 acres.

But in its 266-page report, the GAO questions \$450 million in recurring savings the Army projects it would gain from the entire reorganization based on reductions in military personnel. Auditors say there would be no immediate savings because the Army isn't eliminating people, just redistributing them to other installations.

"They do not represent dollar savings that might be shifted ... to meet other priority needs such as equipment modernization or improving remaining facilities, areas typically cited as likely beneficiaries of BRAC savings," according to the report.

Auditors also raised concerns about the ability of some areas to absorb a wave of new people.

"Addressing the challenges that these communities face may require significant investments, particularly with regard to available housing and schools, which would increase pressures for federal assistance from various agencies to help mitigate these needs," the report said, adding that those potential costs "could be substantial."

Maj. Desiree Wineland, a spokeswoman for the Army, said officials still were reviewing the report Friday and would not have any comment. The report did say that Army officials expected the staggered relocation of units would give communities time to adjust.

Local News Articles

Navy Brass Applaud Shipyard

Portsmouth Herald (Portsmouth, ME)

Karen Dandurant

July 1, 2005

KITTERY, Maine - Even as Portsmouth Naval Shipyard employees and residents of Maine and

New Hampshire are working to persuade a federal commission to remove the yard from the Defense Department's base closure list, the shipyard is being honored by the Navy for excellence.

The shipyard was awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation on Thursday morning, an honor that the governors of Maine and New Hampshire say they believe will carry weight with the Base Realignment and Closure Commission when the panel holds a meeting Wednesday to hear from the yard's supporters.

"The citation ought to be read into the testimony," said Maine Gov. John Baldacci.

"We have here the Navy saying that this is the best shipyard. We will present a very compelling case, and I am much more confident that the people of this yard will make the case."

New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch agreed that the commendation will add to the case to keep the shipyard open.

"We have been talking with the commission members individually, and they all promise they'll be independent of the military. If they do that, then I believe our data will prevail."

Speaking of the 200-plus years the shipyard has served the nation, Lynch received thunderous applause when he said the country needs the yard to continue serving for another 200-plus years.

In addition to the two governors, representatives from both states' congressional delegations attended the ceremony. In a joint letter, the delegation members described the many ways the shipyard meets and exceeds the expectations the Navy sets for it. They applauded the employees' innovation, safety and quality and added that the work should continue for generations.

Rear Adm. Anthony Lengerich, acting commander of the Naval Sea Systems Command, accompanied by Rear Adm. (select) Kevin McCoy, assistant deputy commander for logistics, maintenance and industrial operations

at NAVSEA, formally presented the shipyard's Meritorious Unit Commendation award to Capt. Jonathan Iverson, the shipyard's commander and three union leaders.

Iverson gave credit to all the employees, explaining that the award is about them and their dedication to the work.

In making the presentation, McCoy - Iverson's predecessor as shipyard commander - said it was great to be back home. He likewise commended the work the yard does to complete projects under budget and ahead of schedule. He applauded the employees' commitment, dedication, leadership and excellence.

"I am most proud of the effort being undertaken here for our nation," said McCoy. "You here rewrite the playbook for Navy maintenance."

Rear Adm. Lengerich said the Portsmouth Shipyard is exactly what the Navy needs.

"You are part of this wartime effort on terrorism," he said. "You have established new performance levels and returned the readiness of our fleet."

The Meritorious Unit Commendation was established in 1967. According to information provided by shipyard staff members, receiving it is the equivalent of receiving the Bronze Star for combat units.

The award recognizes the shipyard for meritorious service from Sept. 11, 2001, to Aug. 30, 2004.

Signed by the chief of Naval operations, Adm. V.E. Clark, the award cites the shipyard for "consistently and superbly performing its mission while establishing a phenomenal record of cost, schedule, quality and safety performance.

"The shipyard team has embraced the 'One Shipyard' initiative and is leading the transformation of the Navy's nuclear ship maintenance base through innovation and the application of lean industrial practices. The

shipyard completed six major submarine availabilities early, exceeded Net Operation Results financial goals, reduced injuries by more than 50 percent, and exceeded the secretary of defense's fiscal year 2006 Stretch Goal for lost workday compensation rates two years early."

"In our unity comes strength, and in our strength, we shall persevere," Gov. Baldacci said. "The importance of this facility is each and every one of you," which prompted a cry of "You tell them, Governor," from the crowd.

The ceremony opened with York, Maine, resident Jennifer Saunders singing the national anthem. When she closed the ceremony with "God Bless America," the crowd enthusiastically joined in.

Proposal to Close Pope Air Force Base under Scrutiny

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)
Don Worthington
July 2, 2005

The chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission wants the secretary of defense to justify proposed changes at Pope Air Force Base.

Commission Chairman Anthony J. Principi made the request Friday in a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

The secretary has recommended moving the C-130 cargo planes of the 43rd Airlift Wing to Little Rock, Ark. They would be replaced by planes from the 130th West Virginia National Guard and the 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh.

State and local officials asked the commission Tuesday to keep the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope.

"It sounds like they heard our arguments," Bill Martin said Friday. He is president of the Cumberland County Business Council.

The council also supports moving U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve

Command from Fort McPherson in Atlanta to Fort Bragg.

Retired Army Gen. Buck Kernan and retired Air Force Gen. Paul Dordal, spokesmen for the council, said wing operations need to remain at Pope.

Dordal, a former Pope wing commander, said rapid deployment of the 82nd Airborne Division could be affected in "crisis situations" if the wing is moved.

Representatives from U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole's office and Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue said Principi's request is a positive sign. Dole and Perdue's offices have been coordinating the state's response to base closure and realignment, or BRAC, efforts.

Before the commission can change a BRAC recommendation it must request an explanation from the secretary of defense.

The BRAC commission will meet July 19 on possible changes. It takes seven votes to add an installation to the BRAC list. There are nine commission members.

In his letter, Principi asked whether the "joint operational synergies" that exists between the 18th Airborne Corps and the 43rd Airlift Wing "are able to be replicated from others locations?"

Pope's operations were one of 12 issues that Principi sought for more information.

Any consultations?

Principi wanted to know whether governors and adjutant generals of state Air National Guard units were consulted about proposed changes. At the BRAC hearing in Charlotte on Tuesday, West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin said no one from the Air Force contacted him. He said he will fight moving eight C-130s from Yeager Airport outside Charleston to Pope Air Force Base.

Other bases on Principi's list are the naval shipyard in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the Marine

Corps Recruiting Depot in San Diego; Galena Airport, Alaska; Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine; the Navy Broadway complex in San Diego and Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

He also asked for information on proposed changes to the Navy fighter squadrons, the Defense Finance Service and the Joint Medical Command Headquarters.

In May, the Pentagon proposed closing or reducing forces at 62 major bases and hundreds of smaller installations to save money and streamline operations. The Pentagon estimates its recommendations will save \$49 billion over 20 years.

The commission must send its recommendations to the president in September. President Bush must approve it in its entirety, or send it back to the commission for more work. Once the president approves the BRAC list it goes to Congress, which must accept it or reject it as presented.

On Friday, the Government Accountability Office released its analysis of the secretary of defense's recommendation. It estimated up-front costs will total \$24 billion and questioned the Pentagon's projected savings.

The report said eliminating jobs held by military personnel would make up about half of the annual recurring savings. But the report said much of that money won't be available for other uses because the jobs will move to other areas.

Lawrence Military Jobs Questioned

Indianapolis Star (Indianapolis, IN)

Maureen Groppe

July 1, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The independent base closing commission is questioning a Pentagon proposal that would add nearly 3,500 jobs to the Indianapolis area.

In a letter sent today to the Pentagon, the commission asks why the military didn't explore

other options besides consolidating its finance centers into three primary centers, one of which would be the Defense Finance and Accounting Services center at the former Fort Benjamin Harrison in Lawrence.

"Why did (the Pentagon) not consider other options, which could have avoided military construction costs and possibly produced a more cost-effective option?" the commission wrote.

The Pentagon has estimated it would save \$1.3 billion over the next 20 years by consolidating its finance centers.

Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson said he thought Indiana's accounting center could survive the extra scrutiny because expanding the work force there would not require new construction.

"For that reason," Peterson said, "it would seem to me that we're particularly well-positioned given that the need for new construction seems to be the focus of the questions here."

The 1.6 million-square-foot building in Lawrence is second only to the Pentagon in size among Defense Department buildings worldwide.

At the finance center in Rome, N.Y., which the Pentagon wants to close, news of the commission's query was announced over the public address system.

"People were clapping and very happy," said Ed Abounader, president of the union that represents employees there. "Some folks were crying. There's a lot of good people here. A lot of them worried about their jobs."

Employee Keith Watkins, 43, said he doesn't want to move, but would if the Rome center closed.

"It's encouraging. When we first heard the news I was optimistic things could be changed," Watkins said. "My oldest daughter is in 10th grade. She doesn't want to leave the area or her friends and family."

The nine-member base closing commission is reviewing a Pentagon proposal to close 33 major U.S. bases and restructure 29 others as part of a modernization plan that would also integrate the National Guard and reserves more closely with active-duty forces.

The finance center consolidation was one of a dozen issues the panel raised Friday. It also said it's considering adding more than a dozen installations to the bases it will review and asked for more information on the Pentagon's proposal to consolidate Air National Guard installations.

In Indiana, the Air Guard Station in Terre Haute is slated to lose 138 jobs while the station in Fort Wayne would gain 313.

The commission wants the Pentagon to spell out what effect the consolidations would have on homeland defense and security and whether governors and adjutant generals were consulted.

The commission did not raise questions about the Pentagon's plans to transfer about 700 jobs from the Crane Division, Naval Surface Warfare Center in Martin County. That would cause an 11.6 percent drop in employment in Martin County, the second biggest local economic impact in the nation from the Pentagon's proposals.

Base-closing commission member Sam Skinner visited Crane last month as part of the site visits the panel is conducting of bases slated to close or to lose a significant number of jobs.

Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., are meeting July 12 with commission Chairman Anthony Principi.

Spokesmen for Lugar and Bayh said they will discuss the questions raised in the commission's letter Friday -- as well as all the possible changes affecting Indiana -- at that meeting.

The commission must come up with its final list of recommendations by Sept. 8. That list must

be rejected or approved in its entirety by President Bush and Congress.

The commission asked the Pentagon to give them explanations about the finance center consolidation and other issues its concerned about by July 18, the day before a planned public hearing.

**Future Unclear At Pearl Harbor
A base closure panel's expected message
raises talk of a meeting among shipyard brass**
Honolulu Star-Bulletin (Honolulu, HI)
Gregg K. Kakesako
July 1, 2005

More than 5,000 workers at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, the state's largest civilian employer, learned yesterday that their future could be affected by a federal panel considering the fate of military installations throughout the country.

Several union and shipyard officials have been advised that Capt. Frank Camelio, head of the shipyard, might hold an "all hands" meeting this morning in front of the headquarters building to discuss the shipyard's future.

Camelio's meeting is based on the possibility that the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission could make an announcement today affecting the shipyard. The possibilities range from shutdown to realignment of jobs.

Jason Holm, spokesman for Camelio, would only say last night that "nothing is scheduled as of right now. That may change tomorrow. I am not a fortuneteller."

He would not comment on a meeting that Camelio held yesterday with Pearl Harbor shipyard managers and union officials.

Camelio's meeting this morning appears to be contingent on an expected announcement from the commission, which has been under intense pressure to amend the May 13 Pentagon recommendation to close Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and not the Pearl Harbor shipyard.

In its recommendation to the BRAC commission, Pentagon officials said it was a tossup whether Pearl Harbor or Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine should be closed. Pentagon officials said Portsmouth was selected for closure because that would mean elimination of "excess capacity and satisfy retention of strategically replaced shipyard capacity."

In its report to the commission, Pentagon officials said that the closure of the Portsmouth facility could result in Pearl Harbor getting 111 more shipyard workers.

But some Hawaii union officials noted the irony in the Pentagon's recommendation.

On May 11, Portsmouth shipyard workers were told that they had won the Navy's meritorious award for outperforming the three other repair installations, including Pearl Harbor.

Since then, Portsmouth workers and politicians have rallied to prevent closure of the 297-acre facility, which straddles the border between Maine and New Hampshire.

Under the May Pentagon recommendation, 213 civilians at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service on Ford Island and another 65 civilians at Pearl Harbor's Human Resource Service Center would lose their jobs.

The commission has until Sept. 8 to submit its recommendations to President Bush, who has two weeks to accept or reject the recommendations.

Kennedy Calls Base Closing Risky
Boston Globe (Boston, MA)
Matt Viser
July 1, 2005

Senator Edward M. Kennedy is warning that closing Otis Air National Guard Base could leave the Boston area with just two F-15's on alert stationed within a 175-mile radius, as compared with several dozen watching over Washington, D.C., and New York.

He also said the Coast Guard Air Station, which shares space with Otis on the Massachusetts Military Reservation in Bourne, would have to add 100 employees and \$17 million annually to keep up operations at the base, extra costs that he said could prompt the Coast Guard to relocate.

The arguments highlight the main points that the Massachusetts delegation plans to make next week as they try to convince a nine-member commission that the Pentagon made a mistake by including Otis on a military base closing list.

"The BRAC proposal would leave Boston unprotected," Kennedy said. "I think we have a pretty strong case."

As part of the military's Base Realignment and Closure process, the Pentagon has recommended closing Otis and transferring the 102d Fighter Wing and its F-15s to facilities in Florida and New Jersey.

Kennedy said this week that if those planes were transferred, only two fighter jets would be left within a 175-mile radius of Boston. He said 63 planes patrol Washington's skies and 38 cover New York.

Master Sergeant John Tomassi, spokesman for North American Aerospace Defense Command, said he could not confirm the locations of alert fighter jets, but said they provided recommendations to the Pentagon on what jets could be transferred while still keeping the country safe.

Major General Gary Heckman, cochairman of Air Force Base Closure Executive Group, said yesterday that although fighter jets may not be stationed nearby, they are still capable of patrolling the skies over Boston.

The Pentagon has proposed sending the 15 fighter jets at Otis to expand Jacksonville International Airport Air Guard Station in Florida and add a second squadron to the Atlantic City International Airport Air Guard Station.

Both Otis and the Coast Guard operate on the same 5,500 acres and share many resources, including the airstrip. If Otis, which is operated by the Defense Department, were closed, then the Coast Guard, which is under the wing of the Department for Homeland Defense, would have to decide whether to take on the added costs.

"They'd have to make a judgment," Kennedy said, "but they've got a very tight budget."

Closing Otis and combining its mission with other facilities would eliminate 505 jobs and save \$336.1 million over 20 years, according to Pentagon estimates, a figure Kennedy says does not take into account costs that the Coast Guard would have to absorb.

Air Force officials said yesterday that they did take those costs into account and estimated that it would cost \$7 million for the Coast Guard to maintain the airstrip.

Scott Carr, a New England spokesman for the Coast Guard, said he could not comment on whether the Coast Guard would relocate.

If the Coast Guard Air Station on Cape Cod were to be relocated, the closest outpost would be in Atlantic City, he said. Over the past three years, the Cape Cod station has performed 850 search-and-rescue missions.

Kennedy also said he and other Massachusetts supporters plan to argue that the Pentagon failed to take into account Otis's full military value by not including things like the airstrip or the base's ability for expansion. When compared with 154 other bases with fighter jets, Otis was ranked 88th, but Kennedy said it would have been 28th if other factors were included. That would have put Otis ahead of the 61st-ranked base in Atlantic City.

Workers Hopeful Of Maintaining Portsmouth Naval Yard

Base closure panel will hear case in Boston this week

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)

Michael Levenson

July 3, 2005

KITTERY, Maine -- John Joyal, a welding instructor and 28-year veteran of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, was driving home from the yard Friday when his cellphone rang. It was his friend, another shipyard worker, who said the sprawling seaside complex where they repair nuclear-powered submarines might not be closing, after all.

Anthony Principi, chairman of the commission reviewing the Pentagon's list of military base closures, had asked Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to explain why he had recommended shuttering Portsmouth in Kittery, Maine, given that the Navy's own data show it is more efficient than the Pearl Harbor shipyard in Hawaii.

At home in Somersworth, N.H., Joyal, 49, booted up his computer, and read Principi's letter to Rumsfeld -- five times, he said. "I'm tickled pink that they are asking for more clarification, more substantiation, more proof and evidence as to where DOD stands on Portsmouth," Joyal said yesterday, using the shorthand for the Department of Defense.

"I think Rumsfeld's got some explaining to do, and I can't wait to see what he's got to say," Joyal said.

Other shipyard workers, officials, and supporters of the complex greeted the letter yesterday with a mix of optimism and restraint, hoping that it signaled a small victory for the nation's oldest continuously operating naval yard, first established in 1800 at the mouth of the Piscataqua River. For weeks, elected officials, residents, and workers have been collecting donations, writing letters, and preparing for a hearing in Boston in an effort to keep the shipyard open, and preserve its 4,400 jobs.

Dubbed the "Cradle of American Shipbuilding," Portsmouth built its first vessel in 1815, a 74-

gun warship christened the USS Washington. During World War II, some 25,000 men and women worked at the shipyard, churning out 70 submarines for the American war effort. They launched four in one day. Today, Portsmouth supports a \$283 million payroll, and its workers -- most of whom are civilians -- overhaul, repair, modernize, and refuel some of the Navy's top nuclear-powered submarines. About 60 percent of the workforce comes from Maine, about 40 percent from New Hampshire, shipyard data show.

On Wednesday, Principi's panel, the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission, will gather in Boston for the hearing.

"We're all working very, very hard doing the best we can do, but you know how Washington is -- sometimes you can move them, but you can't sell them," said Portsmouth Mayor Evelyn Sirrell, expressing a tinge of skepticism about the hearing. She plans to attend, joined also by local elected officials and retired Navy Captain William D. McDonough, a former commander of the shipyard and leader of the Save Our Shipyard Campaign.

Like others from the region, Sirrell has a deeply personal connection to the Portsmouth shipyard. Her first husband, an electrician, worked on the base until an accident, while he toiled alone aboard a submarine, cost him his life, she said. As a child, she watched her father head to work every day to the shipyard, where he welded boats. He considered the job one of the best paying in the seacoast region, Sirrell said.

Pentagon documents show Portsmouth was pitted against three other shipyards as Rumsfeld drafted his base-closure list: Puget Sound in Bremerton, Wash.; Norfolk in Virginia; and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The Pentagon decided Puget Sound and Norfolk had to stay open because they were so large that neither Portsmouth nor Pearl Harbor could assume the work, according to documents the Pentagon originally provided the commission.

In an analysis of the shipyards' value to the military, Portsmouth scored slightly higher than

Pearl Harbor, but because Hawaii is located in the Pacific, where there is more Navy ship traffic, the military chose to close Portsmouth. Now, Portsmouth supporters are hoping to persuade Pirncipi's panel to overturn the closure recommendation, before the commission makes its recommendations to President Bush in September. Congress and the president must approve the closures.

"If this were a private industry, we would not be closing," said Frank Coleman, a diver at the shipyard since 1976, who was sipping a draft beer at the Corner Pub in Kittery. "Why would you close one of the most successful bases?"

At Navy Yard Bar and Billiards, a popular hangout for shipyard workers in Kittery, workers take no small amount of pride in the fleet of deep-sea submarines they help maintain. Some nurse a bit of a rivalry with Pearl Harbor.

"We've been holding Pearl Harbor's head out of water for years," said Jim Procaccini, 55, a nuclear engineering instructor who has worked at Portsmouth for 23 years. "Every time they get in trouble, and they're doing a reactor cooler pump or something, we'll go there and save them. And we do that for every Navy yard in the United States. We're the best at what we do."

He was convinced the yard would survive on its merits. So was Joyal. He planned to organize what he said would be 3,500 Portsmouth supporters to travel to the hearing in Boston on 75 school buses and 200 motorcycles. They would wear yellow T-shirts and carry banners declaring, "Save Our Shipyard," he said. Though he was worried that Bush might be reluctant to save a shipyard in a state that voted Democratic in the presidential election, Principi's letter gave Joyal reason to hope, he said.

"If they look at the data, and pull out the political poison pill, Portsmouth will prevail," he said.

Council Lobbies BRAC Panel

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)
Don Worthington

July 3, 2005

The Cumberland County Business Council is willing to spend \$500,000 to recruit its largest prospect ever - the soldiers and staff of the U.S. Army Forces and Reserve commands and the airmen of the 43rd Airlift Wing.

"This is like recruiting three auto assembly plants at the same time," said Bill Martin, president of the Cumberland County Business Council.

At stake is the location of more than 5,000 military and civilian jobs. That figure does not include 3,000 paratroopers who will come to Fort Bragg when a fourth combat brigade is formed.

The council thinks its chances are good and improving.

On Friday, the chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld about his reasons for making changes at Pope.

The council, the local economic development agency, is coordinating Fayetteville and Cumberland County's response to Rumsfeld's base realignment and closure recommendations.

The strategy is simple.

"We want it all," Martin said.

The council made its first public presentations last week in Charlotte, asking the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, or BRAC, to keep the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope and transfer the Army commands to Fort Bragg.

Business council representatives also attended Thursday's BRAC meeting in Atlanta, where Georgia officials fought to keep U.S. Army Forces and Reserve commands at Fort McPherson, which is outside Atlanta.

The business council has been working on BRAC issues for the past two years. Martin disputes claims that the Cumberland County-

Fayetteville effort was lackluster because some considered Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base immune from the BRAC process.

Nonetheless, the proposed shifting of the 43rd Airlift Wing to Jacksonville, Ark., announced May 13, caught many by surprise, Tony Chavonne said.

Chavonne is chairman of the business council's committee to leverage opportunities with the military. He presented the community portion of the council's briefing to the BRAC commissioners.

His presentation included the observation that the area had good spots to golf, citing the recent U.S. Open in Pinehurst.

To make the military arguments, the business council hired retired Army Gen. Buck Kernan and retired Air Force Gen. Paul Dordal.

Kernan, a four-star general, is a former commander of Fort Bragg and the 18th Airborne Corps. Dordal is a former wing commander at Pope.

Martin said he expects their fees will be about 5 percent of the \$500,000.

At Tuesday's hearing, part of Kernan and Dordal's appeal was directed to commission members with military experience. Seven of the nine commissioners served in the military. Three - retired Army Gen. James T. Hill, retired Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr. and Samuel Skinner - attended the Charlotte hearing.

Success in crisis

Kernan and Dordal said the 18th Airborne Corps and Pope Air Force Base and its airlift wing succeeds as America's 911 crisis-response team because the commands are side-by-side.

"When you are deploying many aircraft, the only way to do that is to stretch the rules," Dordal said. "You can only do that if you trust the people who you are working with."

Kernan said moving U.S. Army Forces Command made sense because it put a four-star headquarters commander in direct contact with the "troopers in the trenches."

He said locating U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg would strengthen its relationship with the 18th Airborne Corps and Special Forces command.

Dordal also said the Air Force did not use the BRAC criteria properly when evaluating Pope. One of the objectives of BRAC is establishing joint facilities. A Bragg-Pope joint base was originally one of 12 joint bases considered by BRAC, Dordal said. The joint Pope-Bragg base was dropped from the final BRAC recommendations.

Other communities affected by BRAC made similar claims about Air Force evaluations at Tuesday's meeting. They also came prepared with financial data to support their claims.

The business council didn't have that information Tuesday, but that should not hurt its chances, Martin said.

"If you answer all the questions, you don't get a chance to come back," Martin said.

He said the business council hopes to meet with the BRAC staff to present its financial data and answer other questions.

Georgia's contentions

The business council also will respond to arguments that Georgia officials made to keep U.S. Army Forces and Reserve commands.

Georgia officials said Atlanta is a better location for the commands because of access to an international airport, because Fayetteville lacks a trained work force and that it would be costly to build headquarters at Fort Bragg.

Martin said each claim lacks merit.

Most high-ranking officers fly into Pope on military aircraft, Martin said.

He said Fayetteville's work force is highly skilled because of the large number of military retirees.

Martin said that building costs in North Carolina are the lowest in the nation. The Army estimates it will cost about \$79million to relocate the Forces and Reserve commands to Bragg. Georgia officials put the cost at \$227 million for the same move.

Some of the \$500,000 will be spent to lobby Congress directly, Martin said.

A portion of the money could be spent after Congress votes on BRAC. If new commands or other units are coming to Fort Bragg or Pope, the business council intends to treat them like any other economic development prospect.

"We will talk to them, find out what their needs are," Martin said.

Base Realignment And Closure: Why GF?

N.D. political leaders welcome BRAC request for Pentagon specifics, saying clarity will strengthen base's outlook

Grand Forks Herald (Grand Forks, ND)

Mike Brue

June 2, 2005

The commission charged with deciding the fate of military bases asked the Pentagon on Friday to elaborate by July 18 why it wants to realign, rather than close, Grand Forks Air Force Base.

North Dakota's political leaders say it's about time.

Gov. John Hoeven and the state's congressional delegation - Sens. Kent Conrad and Byron Dorgan and Rep. Earl Pomeroy - on Friday said they want the Air Force to get the opportunity to outline its full mission plan for the Grand Forks base, and finally it's coming.

The Pentagon also has been asked to testify at a July 18 public hearing. But that's just a day

before the BRAC Commission will decide, in open session, whether to add the Grand Forks base or a handful of others to the closure list. Both sessions will be in the Washington D.C. area.

Under the federal BRAC Act of 1990, the extra scrutiny is required before the BRAC Commission can consider moving a base to a closure list, or to expand the downsizing.

Instead of sounding worried Friday, the North Dakotans seemed to welcome the opportunity.

"We believe it could ultimately help Grand Forks," Conrad said in a phone interview Friday, "because it's asking for more detailed information from the Air Force." The commission seeks "greater specificity, something that we've been asking for weeks," he said.

According to Conrad, Dorgan, Pomeroy and Hoeven, the vagueness of the Pentagon's May 13 realignment endorsement for Grand Forks is precisely what continues to leave the base vulnerable to closure, or a more severe realignment.

For any base, realignment can lead to mothballing parts of an installation, or even dividing an installation into parcels, and sell some of them to private interests, effectively reducing that base's potential for future missions.

"It is critical," the North Dakotans said in their statement Friday, "that the BRAC Commission get the data and analysis it needs to support the Air Force recommendation to base future UAV missions and new plans, and possibly the next generation of tankers, at Grand Forks. The reality is the Air Force will need Grand Forks Air Force Base for optimal management and operation of the tanker fleet."

'Inquiring, not deciding'

BRAC chairman Anthony Principi wrote in letters received by the North Dakota leaders Friday that "the Commission has not decided to

close or realign any installations We are in the early stages of a multi-step process. Our request ... is merely for additional data and analysis so that the Commission will be more fully and broadly informed before deciding whether or not to formally consider adding installations to the list."

Principi added, "The Commission is inquiring, not deciding."

Others bases recommended for downsizing that are under the commission's microscope include the Naval Air Station in Maine and Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina.

The BRAC Commission also has asked for more explanation about a proposed reorganization of Air National Guard facilities, including the North Dakota Air National Guard base at Fargo.

The BRAC commissioners want the Air Force to outline the number of unmanned aerial vehicles - so-called drones such as military Predators and Global Hawks - that it wants to assign to Grand Forks, and also to specify the timing of potential deployment.

"This is the same kind of information we've been urging the Air Force to prepare," the North Dakota politicians said in a joint statement.

Getting it on record

To date, Air Force officials have talked about the plan and sent a letter last month to Principi explaining Grand Forks' role in the emerging drone missions. Further elaboration by the Air Force could "clarify where there could easily be confusion," said Chris Thorne, a spokesman in Conrad's Washington office.

Regional BRAC hearings have allowed communities, such as Grand Forks, to state their case for retaining or strengthening their bases.

But the BRAC Commission has not heard much from the Pentagon since May 13, when the military's recommendations to keep the Grand Forks base available for "emerging missions" was announced, along with proposals to close or

reduce forces at 61 other major bases and hundreds of smaller installations.

Under the plan, dozens of other facilities would grow, absorbing troops from domestic and overseas bases slated for closure.

Why GF?

During several days of initial hearings in May, BRAC commissioners questioned Pentagon leaders about the Grand Forks recommendation, but they received few specifics.

As is, the Pentagon recommendation for Grand Forks Air Force Base would result in a worst-case scenario of nearly 5,000 direct or indirect jobs lost in the Grand Forks area from 2006 to 2011, when the BRAC changes would take place. The Pentagon proposes to relocate the base's existing air refueling tanker force to four other bases.

The North Dakota politicians believe that once the Air Force elaborates its Grand Forks plans in detail to BRAC commissioners, the base will gain a stronger status in the BRAC process.

Plus, Conrad added, "It make perfect sense that, if we're ultimately going to get new tankers, to keep some of the existing tankers."

What could happen

At least seven of the nine BRAC commissioners must vote to formally consider adding a base to the Pentagon's list of closures and realignments. If that happened, two BRAC commissioners would visit that base and conduct a public hearing.

The commission's final report is due to President Bush in early September. He must approve it in its entirety or send it back to the commission for a revision. Once the president approves, Congress must accept or reject it as a whole.

The Pentagon says it will save \$49 billion over 20 years by streamlining services across the Armed Forces.

But Friday, the Government Accountability Office released a report that found upfront costs will total \$24 billion. The GAO report questioned the Pentagon's projected savings.

Head of coalition says his group is marginalized

Newsday (Long Island, NY)
July 4, 2005

HARTFORD, Conn. -- The head of a coalition involved in efforts to get the Pentagon to remove the U.S. Navy Submarine Base in Groton from its shutdown list says his group is being shunted aside by state officials.

"We're being marginalized," John Markowicz, the head of the Subase Realignment Coalition said.

Markowicz is referring to the somewhat diminished role his group seems to be playing as state officials plan strategy for hearings that will determine the future of the sub base.

In the two-hour presentation before members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission this week, Markowicz' group will get 30 minutes.

The rest of the pitch time will be taken up by politicians and some retired Navy brass. The presentation is being directed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell's newly hired lobbyists, The Washington Group.

That group was hired 21 days before the hearing. Eleven days later, Markowicz said he still had little idea what they had planned or what others from the long list of speakers would argue during the state's one clear moment of undivided attention.

In 1993, the coalition had managed to head off a BRAC recommendation to remove submarines from Groton. Markowicz was a member during the coalition's victories in the base closing confrontations of the '90s.

The hiring of The Washington Group to coordinate the hearing presentation came as a surprise. "I was told when it was over," Markowicz said.

Markowicz said has also made a point to note each time he and his coalition weren't invited to a big meeting or a press conference.

The governor's office, too, is aware of the coalition's protests about being out of the loop.

"I'm really on the outside looking in," Markowicz said.

However, a spokesman for Rell said it is a matter of working things out.

"I hear those concerns. I know those concerns exist," Rich Harris, a Rell spokesman said.

"Everybody is beating their brains out trying to make it work," Harris said. And as for bringing on The Washington Group, he said, "They've got experience getting bases off the list and keeping them off."

Markowicz expects his coalition to have an important voice in the process.

This Wednesday, he'll stand before BRAC commissioners and deliver his piece of the presentation.

After the hearing, Markowicz is counting on six more weeks of sending further arguments to the commission's staff until that staff has to put together its own list of closures for the nine bosses. The commissioners must send their final list to the president by Sept. 8.

Losses tallied in base closings

Associated Press (ME)
July 1, 2005

AUGUSTA — Economic analysts from inside and outside state government gathered Thursday for a mini-retreat with a new item on their customary agenda: the potential impact from

decisions by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Members of two panels of forecasters agreed with the obvious: that developments affecting military facilities in Maine bear close watching.

They also received briefing material from the state Labor Department underscoring the importance of the facilities to the Maine economy.

Addressing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, the Labor Department analysis predicted that in Maine towns nearest the shipyard "the direct loss of 2,771 jobs by Maine residents would increase the number of unemployed in the region threefold and cause the unemployment rate to spike from 3.5 percent to 8.1 percent."

Despite advanced skills in certain trades, "the knowledge, skills and experience of those workers are not directly transferable to most industries in the region," the report said.

The Labor Department said employment projections to 2012 for southern Maine suggest a continuing decline in manufacturing jobs.

"Based upon past experience with base closings, plant closings and major work force reductions, it is likely that most of the displaced workers will experience a substantial drop in earnings upon re-employment and that some will choose to move to another region in order to find suitable employment," the report said.

The Pentagon says closing Portsmouth will save \$21 million initially, then \$129 million annually by shifting work to yards at Norfolk, Va., Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Puget Sound, Wash.

The Pentagon says the closure would cost about 9,000 jobs, direct and indirect, but officials in Maine and New Hampshire have argued the total could be nearly twice as high.

The Pentagon also has proposed a dramatic reduction of the Brunswick Naval Air Station by moving all of its P-3 Orion and C-130 Hercules

squadrons and about 2,300 military personnel to the Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida.

Realignment of the air station "would displace just 61 civilian workers" but "the removal of 2,317 military personnel, along with their spouses and children, would result in a population loss in the area of perhaps 4,500 to 5,000," the Labor Department said.

"Such a dramatic loss in population (would) have an obvious adverse impact on local demand for goods and services. The State Planning Office estimates that the direct impact of job and earnings losses will total 2,461 jobs and \$69.5 million in earnings. The indirect impact will be an additional 2,194 jobs and \$65.4 million in earnings," the Labor Department report said.

Also targeted for closing is the Defense Finance Accounting Service center in Limestone.

"The direct loss of 310 DFAS jobs would increase the number of unemployed in the region by nearly one-third and cause the unemployment rate to spike from 5.1 percent to 6.7 percent," the Labor Department said.

Two key military bases drawing BRAC comment

New Bern Sun Journal (New Bern, NC)
Sue Book
July 02, 2005

Two military bases of key concern to North Carolina are among those drawing comment from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission: Pope Air Force Base and Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.

Winding up two weeks of hearings on the Department of Defense BRAC list announced May 13, BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi queried Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld Friday about why Pope Air Force Base was not considered for closing, rather than realignment, and what consideration was given to realigning the Master Jet Base at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., to Moody AFB in Georgia.

"No deliberation will be made on whether to include any of these installations for further study of closure or realignment until the commission's open hearing of July 19," Principi wrote, requesting Rumsfeld's comment by July 18 to help facilitate a tight timetable that puts final deliberations the week of Aug. 22.

Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow members asked for Oceana's assets at Tuesday's BRAC Commission hearings in Charlotte and are pleased the commission is recognizing the need to move Oceana's planes somewhere else.

"I think this means they are looking at the situation at Oceana," said Jimmy Sanders, president of ACT. "Hopefully when they do that, they will see the value of Cherry Point as an alternative basing site."

Troy Smith, who asked Tuesday that Oceana's F/A-18 Super Hornets be sent to Cherry Point and a needed and contested outlying landing field be sent to Craven County, said "there is no question but that Oceana is going to get closed. It's just a question of when, and now is as good a time as any."

Tuesday hearing presenter Tom Braaten, a retired Cherry Point commanding general, said the suggestion for the planes to be sent to Moody is surprising since "normally the Navy likes to keep their jet aircraft that are carrier deploying aircraft close to the water."

"I've never been to Moody, but I looked it up and it's in the south central part of Georgia, which is not exactly on the water. Jets can fly, so that's not a stopper, but it is kind of a shocker," Braaten said. "But clearly Oceana is a concern. I was surprised it was not on the initial BRAC list. They don't have the nice encroachment buffers we have here."

That figures heavily in the OLF needed for Super Hornet pilot landing practice before going to the ship, he said.

Smith, a partner in the management firm for ACT's BRAC initiative, said this commission is

being more proactive than previous BRAC commissions.

He said he was pleased the 2005 BRAC Commission is not going to be a rubber stamp for the politicians.

"The bottom line is that it is absolutely no surprise Principi is trying to figure out why the hell Oceana is still open," he said, noting "that it is interesting that the Georgia alternative has surfaced this early. If we look at who we might compete with, they're the only one."

As for the status of Pope AFB, Braaten said he thinks the commission will find out that the reason the Department of Defense recommended realigning rather than closing that base is that "you've got to have a place where you put the troops on board and fly them out" and he suspects the 82nd Airborne will have no difficulty answering that question.

Principi's letter requests information on 12 general scenarios, spelling out the issue, its background and the specific recommendation it addresses and comes after commission hearings at 10 locations across the country.

He stated Friday that if at the July 19 public hearings at least seven commissioners support adding an installation to initial BRAC list.

A Government Accountability Office report released Friday questions the Pentagon's assessment that the proposed closing or trimming of 62 major bases and hundreds of smaller installation would save the \$49 billion over 20 years as originally projected for the 2005 BRAC.

Specter, Santorum, Rendell to argue for state's bases

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Philadelphia, PA)
Kimberly Hefling
July 4, 2005

An all-star lineup of Pennsylvania politicians will fight Thursday to retain the state's military

bases before a commission charged with advising Congress and President Bush on which ones should close.

The Pentagon recommended in May that the Willow Grove Naval Air Station outside Philadelphia and the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station close. About 1,600 jobs are at stake.

In the four previous base closure rounds, only 10 percent to 15 percent of bases on the closure lists were able to get off.

"It's not an easy thing to do. It's a very high bar. We've got a lot of work ahead of us," said Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., who will speak along with fellow Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, and others.

The hearing in Washington is one of the state's last opportunities to defend the bases' "military value" before the nine-member Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

The commission must report its decisions to President Bush by Sept. 8. The decisions become law 45 days later unless Congress enacts a joint resolution rejecting them; it can reject them in whole but not in part.

The Pittsburgh base is home to the Air Force's 911th Tactical Airlift Group, which employs 322. Its mission is to recruit and train Air Force personnel and provide airlift of airborne forces and equipment.

The Pentagon justified the recommended closing of the base by saying land constraints prevent it from housing more than 10 C-130 aircraft. Rep. Tim Murphy, R-Pa., said he will argue the county is willing to make 53 acres available that can store 16 C-130s.

"If they correct those errors in scoring, the 911th actually scores much higher than the ones remaining open," Murphy said. "It's a real snafu."

Willow Grove is home to the 913th Airlift Wing, which trains and equips reservists. Air logistic support for active and reserve Navy units is also provided there.

Santorum said for Willow Grove a case will be made that it is an unauthorized approach to decommission a Guard unit there without the approval of the governor.

On Friday, Anthony Principi, chairman of the base closure commission, asked in a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld if adjutant generals and governors of states had been consulted in the reallocation of Guard units.

Principi is scheduled to visit Willow Grove on Tuesday.

Like in Pittsburgh, Santorum said an argument will also be made that a thorough assessment was not done on the base's ability to expand.

Reps. Curt Weldon, Bill Shuster, Paul Kanjorski, Don Sherwood, and Allyson Schwartz are among the other Pennsylvania politicians also expected to speak, along with military leaders and community personnel.

Even though the Pentagon recommended that Tobyhanna and Letterkenny Army depots together receive a net of almost 700 new jobs, there will also be arguments presented at Thursday's hearing on behalf of the two depots.

That's because the Pentagon recommended jobs from the Red River Army Depot in Texas be moved to the two Pennsylvania depots, and Texas officials are fighting the move, Santorum said.

"We have to make the counter offer because no one else is going to," Santorum said.

This is the first base closure round in a decade. In the four previous, the state lost more than 3,000 military positions and more than 13,000 civilian jobs. The most damaging was the loss a decade ago of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, the closing of which Specter fought before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In all, the Pentagon recommended the closure of 13 bases in Pennsylvania and the downsizing of five.

For an installation to be added to the recommended closure list, seven out of the nine base closure commissioners must vote for the addition.

When you take one base off the list, "it has a whole range of impacts for other decisions they've made," said Tim Ford, executive director of the Association of Defense Communities.

Ford said there is not one factor that has contributed to bases staying open after they are recommended for closure because each base round and each base is different.

Ford said he's advising communities on the Pentagon's recommended list for closure to be looking at Plan B.

"Everyone is going to fight the good fight, but there are going to be some losers in this," Ford said.

Specter, however, said in a statement that Pennsylvania's bases have a good shot.

"We are going to put on a real fight to retain our bases in Pennsylvania," Specter said. "We're not making any concessions."

Covering all the bases

Like many states facing Pentagon cutbacks, Maine is struggling to avoid the ax

U.S. News & World Report (ME)

Bret Schulte

July 4, 2005

KITTERY, MAINE--It's a state whose name is almost synonymous with summertime R&R. But Maine this summer is seeing more restlessness than relaxation. On June 1 in Kittery, just across the Piscataqua River from Portsmouth, N.H., roughly 8,000 people, most in bright yellow T-shirts declaring "Save Our Shipyard," converged on downtown with defiant cries of "We're No.

1!" The next day, about 75 miles up the coast, several hundred locals clustered together outside the Brunswick Naval Air Station at a chilly 7 a.m. toting signs saying, "Protect Our Homeland." In Augusta, the state capital, Gov. John Baldacci has ordered state agencies to prepare to cope with widespread layoffs, and the Legislature is wringing emergency funds from already dry state coffers.

For Maine, these are indeed anxious days--and it is not alone. On May 13 (even those who aren't superstitious noted it was a Friday), the Defense Department recommended closing 33 major military bases around the country and restructuring 29 others to cut costs and streamline operations. There's little dispute about the need for the cutbacks--unless it's your community that's going to be hit. This round of the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process, the fifth since 1988, could leave Maine reeling. All three of its major military facilities are on the BRAC list: The 205-year-old Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Limestone are recommended for closure. The Brunswick Naval Air Station stands to lose at least half its personnel--and its entire fleet of patrol planes. But the recommendations are just that, which leaves Maine's community leaders, the governor, and its two Republican senators still hoping to dodge the bullet.

Maine's fate will be decided by nine BRAC commissioners appointed by the White House and congressional leaders from both parties. Led by former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, the independent body is meant to depoliticize the BRAC process. The commission holds public hearings, conducts site tours, and reviews data related to the BRAC criteria of military value, cost efficiency, and economic impact. But with only about 15 percent of BRAC recommendations overturned by previous commissions, the chances of getting a base off the list are slim. A final list that can be vetoed only in its entirety will be submitted to the president on September 8. Once accepted, the list moves on to Congress and takes effect unless Congress votes it down within 45 legislative days.

Bad timing. Maine has been through this before; in the mid-1990s, it lost Loring Air Force Base, which had some 4,500 military personnel and 1,100 civilians. It got the Limestone accounting center, employing about 350 people, to help soften the blow--and now that facility is targeted along with the shipyard, whose largely civilian workforce totals 4,800. All told, state economists estimate the proposed cutbacks would cost Maine's economy \$ 465 million annually through the loss of 12,000 direct and indirect jobs. Baldacci likens it to "losing our fishing, forestry, and farming industries in one fell swoop." While Maine has finally replaced the jobs lost in the 2001 recession, the manufacturing base has steadily given way to the lower-paying service sector. What's more, a voter referendum requiring the state to pay a larger portion of local education costs has left Maine cash-strapped at a time when it faces a \$ 342 million federal Medicaid shortfall over 10 years. After the BRAC news, Augusta legislators were forced to reopen what was a contentious budget to find new ways to curtail spending. In the frantic statehouse, Rep. Carol Grose laments, "This has been a bad year for Maine."

The day of reckoning could be July 6, when the full BRAC Commission comes to Boston for a regional hearing. For New England, hit particularly hard in this round, it's the best chance to make the case that the Pentagon has massively underestimated--or, as many contend, misrepresented--the value of these installations and the cost of shutting them down. Accusations are swirling that the Pentagon's list amounts to political retribution. So-called blue states, Maine included, would suffer a loss of 24,000 jobs, while traditionally red states would net 12,000, mostly in the South and West. The nuclear submarine repair and refueling work currently performed in Kittery, for instance, would shift to Norfolk, Va. The Brunswick fleet would depart for Jacksonville, Fla.

In Maine, the outcry was loud and clear the first week of June, when four BRAC commissioners took fact-finding tours of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

Cheering crowds rallied to greet the commissioners, while showing contempt for the Defense Department. In Kittery, where signs expressed sentiments like "Downsize the Pentagon," demonstrator Peggy Evans, a third-generation employee of the shipyard, said it was targeted because "we didn't support the president in the last election." Back in Augusta, after joining the commissioners and the entire Maine congressional delegation on both site visits, Baldacci, a Democrat, put it this way: "When you look at the map, it's very clear to me we get penalized for being Red Sox fans instead of the Texas Rangers."

The Pentagon, though, argues the recommendations are based on the BRAC criteria. Many experts agree, saying the shift from North and East to South and West reflects a move away from a Cold War posture. They point to South Dakota, where Republican John Thune unseated Democratic Senate Leader Tom Daschle in November. One of his winning arguments: A Republican was better positioned to save Ellsworth Air Force Base from BRAC. Ellsworth, the state's second-largest employer, appeared on the hit list anyway.

But the Pentagon has fueled suspicions with its slow, piecemeal release of BRAC-related documents justifying the recommendations. Maine's two moderate Republican senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, have accused the Pentagon of foot-dragging and stonewalling, though neither asserts that BRAC is political. "I believe this process is driven by the numbers," Snowe says, "to reach an arbitrary bottom line of theoretical and hypothetical cost savings." Snowe says the delay in obtaining BRAC paperwork made fighting the recommendations "infinitely more difficult." To put pressure on the Pentagon, Snowe and Collins joined with Thune and senators from other affected states to engage in some gamesmanship by introducing long-shot legislation to suspend the BRAC process. On June 7, Collins, who chairs the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, played her trump card. She joined with the committee's ranking Democrat, Joe Lieberman of Connecticut--the only state slated to lose more

jobs from BRAC than Maine--to subpoena the Pentagon to force it to declassify and release all appropriate BRAC-related data.

Maine has hired the PMA Group, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm, at \$ 16,000 a month to look for holes in the Pentagon's assertions and to press its cause with BRAC Commission staff. Money is also being doled out to community task forces composed of military veterans, civilian employees, and local leaders with detailed knowledge of the facilities and some experience with past BRAC battles. The Save Our Shipyard Association has received \$ 100,000 from the state of New Hampshire, where 40 percent of its employees live. It received a like amount from the Maine statehouse, which has also sent emergency funds to groups in Brunswick and Limestone. The shipyard group hired its own Washington consultant. Brunswick members made eight trips to Washington to meet with Pentagon officials and comb through the BRAC library searching for the secrets of bases that got off the list. "We're taking their expertise and refuting the Navy data and tearing the case apart brick by brick," says Lance Boucher, a top Baldacci aide who is coordinating the BRAC fight.

Challenges. Maine is arguing that the Pentagon is wrong on several counts: that the economic impact on communities is underestimated; that base improvements, such as Brunswick's new \$ 21 million hangar designed for the next generation of patrol planes, should weigh more heavily in the air station's favor; and that the Pentagon neglected \$ 288 million in savings achieved at the cost-efficient shipyard. Another bone of contention is the projected cost of environmental cleanup at the nuclear-licensed yard, which Maine believes would run as much as \$ 200 million more than the Pentagon's \$ 47 million estimate.

To sway the BRAC Commission, however, Maine must win on the chief criterion, military value, a touchy subject in the Northeast, which was a focus of the 9/11 attacks and has been hit hard in past BRAC rounds. Brunswick is the last active-duty air station in the region. From her spot on the Homeland Security Committee,

Collins has argued that the Northeast remains vulnerable to terrorism, especially weapons of mass destruction arriving by cargo ship. Brunswick's planes "have played an increasing role in providing maritime surveillance for the North Atlantic shipping lanes," Collins says. "They cannot perform that role effectively if they are stationed in Jacksonville."

After site visits in Maine, Principi pledged, "We are not a rubber stamp" for the Pentagon's BRAC list. That's encouraging for those in the fight to save Maine's bases. "A lot of us felt like what's defined us over the last century is being . . . some of the best Navy support and military infrastructure in the world," says Maine's House majority leader, Glenn Cummings, whose brother, grandfather, and great-grandfather have all worked as Navy shipbuilders. "It goes beyond the issue of just livelihood. It's about how we've defined ourselves."

Base advocates ready their defenses; Wednesday's hearing is seen as critical to those arguing for keeping Maine bases open.

Portland Press Herald (Portland, ME)

Bart Jansen

July 3, 2005

Supporters of Maine's three military bases pose three central arguments for keeping them open - and possibly expanding them - at a time when the Defense Department is recommending closures and cuts. N Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery deserves to remain open because it does a better job repairing nuclear submarines than any other yard, public or private.

- Brunswick Naval Air Station enjoys a location that can't be matched - and that the Pentagon doesn't want to give up.

- The Defense Finance and Accounting Service at the former Loring Air Force Base in Limestone stacks up well against rivals, and advocates contend it would be relatively inexpensive to expand it.

Maine political leaders, along with retired military officials and community activists, will

deliver these arguments Wednesday in Boston at a hearing of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The hearing comes three months before the commission makes its final decision. BRAC must deliver its final list to President Bush by Sept. 8. Bush and Congress can then either accept or reject the entire list, but cannot change it.

"This hearing is critical," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, a member of the Armed Services Committee. "Other than site visits, it's the most important event in the whole BRAC process."

Maine could lose 7,000 jobs, the second-largest total in the country, if the recommendations from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are followed. Closing the shipyard would cost 4,510 jobs; realigning Brunswick, 2,420 jobs; and closing the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Limestone, 361 jobs.

Gov. John Baldacci and the state's congressional delegation - Republican Sens. Olympia Snowe and Collins and Democratic Reps. Tom Allen and Mike Michaud - have spent weeks coordinating efforts to preserve the bases.

Lawmakers from the Maine and New Hampshire delegations held practice sessions last week with Baldacci to rehearse their arguments. The hearing allows two hours for both states to discuss the Kittery shipyard and an hour each for the Brunswick base and the Limestone accounting center.

Four commissioners are scheduled to hear the testimony: Anthony Principi, the former secretary of veterans affairs; retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton; former Rep. James Bilbray of Nevada; and retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner.

PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is at risk because the Navy contends it has more shipyard capacity than it needs. Its closest rival, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii, is less efficient but enjoys a strategic location in the Pacific.

Advocates plan to focus on the yard's efficiency, returning ships to the fleet faster than expected and at an estimated savings of \$53 million per year. Minutes of decision-making meetings showed that the Navy wrestled with how to value the shipyard's efficiency but gave up when the recommendation was made to shut down the yard.

"They save time and money," Snowe said. "They just don't encounter them, so they're not accustomed to measuring a yard like Portsmouth."

Snowe also disputed the assertion that the Navy has too many yards. The Navy hasn't said where it will send 13 ship-repair projects now scheduled for the Kittery shipyard, and she argued that other yards will fall behind.

"They're stretched to the limit currently," Snowe said. "It's going to create a significant backlog that prevents the president from meeting his own defense commitments."

The Government Accountability Office reported Friday that the Navy initially decided against closing any shipyard because that would leave too much work for the other three.

But based on a March estimate of the future size of the fleet, the Navy decided it could lose either Portsmouth or Pearl Harbor. Despite Pearl Harbor's "slightly lower military value score," it has advantages in handling aircraft carriers that Portsmouth Naval Shipyard can't and serving as home port for many ships.

The base-closing commission asked Friday for Rumsfeld to detail why he chose to close the Kittery shipyard rather than the Pearl Harbor yard. The reply is expected by July 18.

Other arguments for Portsmouth are its workers' expertise, and that it has a license to handle nuclear-powered ships, which is considered difficult to replace. At the same time, the Pentagon's \$47 million estimate for environmental cleanup costs is too low, according to advocates, who contend it could

total \$200 million or more, based on comparable installations that closed in the last round.

"They have underestimated the costs without question and disturbingly so," Snowe said. "Then the question is what level will it be remediated."

BRUNSWICK

Brunswick Naval Air Station prompts a narrower dispute. The Navy recommended reducing its staff and sending its aircraft to Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida to save an estimated \$239 million over 20 years.

But critics contend the savings are negligible and overstated when considering longer flight times to cover missions.

"I intend to show that the cost savings put forward by the Navy are erroneous and built upon assumptions that cannot withstand even rudimentary scrutiny," Snowe said.

The Navy opted to hold on to the base, rather than close it, because of its strategic location. Brunswick's advocates plan to highlight that value as the reason to leave it unchanged.

"The whole idea of the P-3 is to have them up in the air for a long time to do surveillance," Collins said. "If you have to fly for three hours to get to the point where surveillance is needed, you reduce your time on site."

LIMESTONE

The military plans to consolidate 26 accounting offices at three locations, which would close the office in Limestone. But after doing financial studies of the entire system, the military apparently didn't compare individual offices to see which should remain open, Collins said. The comparisons give Limestone high marks for its work force and low operational costs.

Although commissioners were tight-lipped after tours, Newton, who visited Limestone last week, suggested that three accounting centers is too

few - without saying what a better figure might be.

"We can save money by growing Loring," Michaud said.

Lawmakers and staffers have been working to build their case. Their testimony will feature Powerpoint presentations to illustrate their arguments, and commissioners could also ask questions that aren't included within the time limits.

"It's the last best chance to present a comprehensive case," Allen said.

S.C. base to take young Air Force under wing of senior Air Guard

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Eastover, SC)
Susanne M. Schafer
July 3, 2005

National Guard installations around the country are bemoaning shutdowns and cutbacks under the Pentagon's base closure plans, yet veteran pilots and crew chiefs at a small Air National Guard unit in central South Carolina are celebrating.

Instead of being closed or wrapped into an active duty base, the Air Force's so-called weekend warriors at McEntire Joint National Guard Base are set to train young, full-time servicemen and women under the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure plan.

"This is new," said Lawrence Korb, an assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration. "But under this BRAC, everything that was done was new. This allows the active duty to be deployed and the Guard to stay back and be used as a training force."

Korb, a senior fellow with the Washington, D.C., think tank Center for American Progress, called the proposal "a very creative idea."

Brig. Gen. George Patrick, head of the South Carolina Air National Guard, said he was able to

convince Gen. Michael Moseley, confirmed as Air Force chief of staff this week and a former commander at nearby Shaw Air Force Base, that the McEntire crews had a lot to offer full-time, active duty military men and women.

"We told the Air Force, 'Send us your inexperienced people, and we can season them,'" said Patrick. "We hope they will come straight out of technical schools, straight out of pilot training."

Since most pilots and crews here have private sector jobs and came to the Guard after serving in the active duty, showing a little gray at the temples is a mark of achievement, Patrick says with a laugh. Most active duty pilots "are a young bunch" and are considered senior "if they hit 25," the one-star general said.

"A lot of the pilots around here are like me, a little long in the tooth but with a lot of experience," said Patrick, who has put in nearly 2,000 hours flying F-16s. "Our experience makes up for the fact that we may not do our flying every day."

Part-time National Guard and Reserve forces provide nearly half of the U.S. force in Iraq and most of the U.S. peacekeeping contingent in Kosovo.

While most senior active duty pilots and crew chiefs are moved frequently and usually are promoted to deskbound, managerial jobs, the Guardsmen are able to live in the community and forge longtime bonds with a particular unit.

Tech Sgt. Tony Heidenreich, 43, said he knows active duty crews that come to work at McEntire will be loath to leave "because we treat people well. They know it's a partnership."

"The one down side to all of this is that everyone who comes here to train will be sad to leave. And I guarantee it, some of them will leave active duty and come back to the Guard," Heidenreich said.

Col. Mike Hudson, a squadron commander with a 2,000-hour flight patch, agreed.

"We fish together. We hunt together. I know when I walk out on the flight line and Tony has handled my plane, I know it's good to go if he says so," he said. "We are a part of the community. We know one another."

Hudson, 47, said the move to train young active duty pilots at McEntire got a test run once before. When F-16s based in Misawa, Japan, were undergoing an upgrade, the 26 active duty pilots based there came to McEntire to keep up their flight time.

Because the McEntire jets already were upgraded, "We sent them back even more experienced than when they came to us," Hudson said. "It was huge. Their commander was amazed."

John Goheen, spokesman for the National Guard Association, called the training plan "very counterintuitive."

"It is not the full-time, active duty pilots that are the more experienced. In some cases, it is the Air National Guard pilots who may have hundreds of hours, not just in flying but in flying in combat," he said.

Of the unit's three dozen Guard pilots, their average age is 39. Nine are graduates of the Air Force's fighter weapons school. The average McEntire Guard pilot has 2,269 hours in a jet fighter, 1,838 hours in an F-16 and 207 hours in combat, Patrick said.

In their enlisted ranks, the average McEntire crewman is 38 and has completed 16 years of maintenance work. In the active duty service, most crews serve a six-year stint unless they re-enlist.

Goheen said McEntire's level of training makes it "an invaluable team. You can't replicate that experience anywhere else."

McEntire is one of the Air Force's top National Guard units because its members have deployed in five major conflicts since the Korean War.

Pilots from the 169th Fighter Wing flew more than 2,000 combat missions during the first Iraq war in 1991. Some of the same pilots returned in 2003 to fly more than 400 combat missions in Iraq.

Goheen also said McEntire stands in sharp contrast to many Guard units elsewhere in the country. Of 88 Air Guard units, 28 are supposed to lose all of their planes under the Pentagon's latest base closure proposals.

Patrick said he was pleased when the Pentagon's closures and realignments were announced because McEntire "got what we asked for." Officially, it may take several years to arrange the switches, which are expected to bring 400 jobs and six additional F-16s to the installation.

"This is a revolutionary way of doing business," says Patrick, who promoted the idea during the current base closure process. "This is not just some small, sleepy little Air National Guard installation. ... We have a lot of heritage here."

McEntire men and women are dubbed the "Swamp Foxes" in a nod to South Carolina's Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion, a farmer who formed the local militia into a potent guerrilla force that led daring raids against British troops.

BRAC chairman questions keeping Oceana open

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (VA)
July 3, 2005

Virginia officials are scrambling to protect Oceana Naval Air Station, which suddenly appeared on the radar of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The Virginia Beach facility - the Navy's main jet base on the East Coast - had escaped the list of bases proposed for shutdown by the Pentagon. The recommendations were announced in May.

But the commission asked Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld in a letter on Friday to explain why the Pentagon recommended

keeping Oceana, rather than moving its planes to Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta, Georgia.

Moody "would appear to have the necessary room for expansion" to accommodate Oceana's F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets, BRAC chairman Anthony J. Principi wrote in the letter to Rumsfeld.

And perhaps more important, a move to Moody "would appear to alleviate the severe encroachment" that limits the Navy's ability to use the base, Principi wrote, referring to the development of subdivisions and businesses in high-noise areas near the facility.

His letter stopped short of targeting Oceana - the votes of seven of the nine BRAC commissioners are required to take that step - but a commission spokesman, Robert McCreary, acknowledged that it puts the Virginia Beach base "in play" in the high-stakes closure process.

The commission has set a July 19 meeting to vote whether to formally add any bases to the list of those being considered for closure.

With more than 15,000 uniformed and civilian workers, Oceana is Virginia Beach's largest employer and the Navy's largest East Coast air base. The base, opened during World War II, is home to more than 140 F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets as well as about 50 F-14 "Tomcats." The latter plane is to be out of service by late next year.

Bob Matthias, assistant to the Virginia Beach city manager, said the upfront costs of moving Oceana's jets to Moody are estimated at \$600 million.

A study in 2001 said closing the base would leave a \$1 billion hole in the local economy.

Adm. Vern Clark, the chief of naval operations, told commission members in May that the Navy considered shifting Oceana's planes to several other bases, including Moody. But Clark said officials concluded that "there weren't any other places that had airspace" for Navy pilots to train

without raising the same kind of encroachment concerns the service faces at Oceana.

In recent years the Navy has been fielding regular complaints about jet noise from the suburbs and pressing Virginia Beach to control development near the field.

Though federal, state and local officials stressed that the Principi letter does not mean that Oceana is now a target, local elected leaders said they plan to step up efforts to preserve the base.

"I'm prepared for battle," said U.S. Sen. John W. Warner, R-Va., who called Oceana "integral to naval operations" all along the East Coast.

Warner said he is conferring with state and local officials about adding information about Oceana's value in a briefing for BRAC members during a public hearing on Virginia bases next week in Washington.

"Our entire community, including current and retired Navy personnel, have been working together to do our best to ensure that Oceana's planes stay right here in Virginia Beach," Rep. Thelma Drake, R-2nd, and Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf said in a joint statement Friday.

They expressed confidence the commission would realize the Navy is best served by keeping the jets in Hampton Roads, close to the aircraft carriers from which they fly.

George Foresman, Gov. Mark R. Warners top aide on base closing issues, said the letter gives local officials an opening to debunk "urban myths" about the amount of development around Oceana and its impact on base operations.

Foresman said that Navy and local officials have managed "a phenomenal level of cooperation" in managing growth around the base.

DOD report challenges USAF plans for 130th

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Charleston, WV)

July 2, 2005

The U.S. Air Force contends it will save money by stripping the West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing of its planes, but a team of analysts hired by the U.S. Defense Department has concluded the opposite.

Dubbed the "Red Team," the panel of former top government officials found that removing the eight C-130 Hercules turboprops from Charleston's Yeager Airport would cost \$39.7 million over the next 20 years, in part because Yeager charges the Air Guard \$1-a-year lease for its base there.

Those costs will only increase after 20 years, according to a white paper issued by the group that also mentions Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota and other facilities slated for closure.

"There is no consistency in approach taken in capacity analysis. USAF defines capacity based on the difference between actual squadron size and optimum squadron size," the team wrote in its report, dated April 18.

The Red Team concluded that the Air Force is using the Base Realignment and Closure Commission process, which aims to streamline military operations and cut costs, "only to move aircraft and gain MILCON (military construction) funding rather than reducing excess infrastructure."

The Defense Department wants to move the 130th's planes to Pope Air Force Base near Fayetteville, N.C., where they would be paired with eight other C-130s from Pittsburgh's 911th Airlift Wing to form a 16-plane unit.

The move is part of a Pentagon plan to close 33 major bases and downsize 29 others in an effort to save \$48.8 billion over 20 years and also promote cooperation among the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

The nine-member commission has begun reviewing the Pentagon's plan, issued in May,

and must send a final list to the White House and Congress this fall. West Virginia officials, including its congressional delegation, have by lobbying the commission and Pentagon officials to remove the 130th from the list. State officials argue that removing the plans will cost 156 full-time military and civilian jobs and about 700 part-time positions. The unit employs 320 full-time military and civilian staffers. Another 700 National Guard members are assigned to the unit.

Military base review panel questions need for Galena airfield

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (AK)
July 2, 2005

The military base review commission has asked the Pentagon why an airfield at a village on the middle Yukon River has remained open.

Base Realignment and Closure Commission Chairman Anthony Principi questioned the worth of the Galena Air Force Station and 11 other military installations around the country in a letter on Friday to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"The requirement for maintaining two forward operating locations in Alaska may no longer be valid," the commission said. "The mission could be accomplished by maintaining one FOL and two Air Force bases in Alaska."

Galena is one of the two "forward operation locations" in Alaska that serve as alert bases for aircraft, the commission said. The other is at King Salmon on the Alaska Peninsula, according to Washington D.C.-based GlobalSecurity.org.

The law that authorized the first round of base closings in a decade in May requires a response from the Pentagon before the commission can recommend closing or downsizing a facility, such as Galena, that wasn't on Rumsfeld's original list.

The Pentagon must also have seven votes from the nine-member commission to add other installations to the closure list.

The letter also asks why Marine Corps Recruit Depot and the Navy Broadway Complex, both in San Diego, Calif., and the U.S. Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, were not slated for closure.

Galena served as an Air Force base during much of the Cold War but the facility was mostly closed during the mid-1990s. A long runway with some Air Force structures remains.

According to GlobalSecurity.org, based in Washington, D.C., Galena is a little-used site that previously served as an alert base for F-15 fighters.

Air Force officials could not be immediately reached by the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner for information on Galena's current function.

In May, the Pentagon proposed closing or reducing forces at 62 major bases and hundreds of smaller installations to save money and streamline the services. Dozens of other facilities would grow by absorbing troops from domestic and overseas bases set to be closed or downsized.

The two Air Force bases in Alaska are Eielson, just outside Fairbanks, and Elmendorf, just outside Anchorage. Both are slated for substantial reductions in jets and personnel under the Pentagon's May 13 recommendations to the Pentagon.

The commission will conduct a public hearing on July 19 in Washington to decide whether bases left off the May 13 list should be added.

The Pentagon says it will save \$49 billion over 20 years by streamlining services across the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and shutting down bases deemed inefficient.

Practice and making BRAC more perfect

Bangor Daily News (Bangor, ME)

Todd Benoit

Jul Practice, and making BRAC more perfect
July 2, 2005

Last Monday, the members of Congress from Maine told the Base Realignment and Closure Commission the military doesn't appreciate how efficient the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is, nor does it grasp the backlog on overhauling submarines. Tuesday, they filled the commission in on the crucial role of the Brunswick Naval Air Station for maritime patrol and homeland security. Wednesday was DFAS - the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Limestone that the Defense Department failed to understand was cost efficient and plenty secure.

Then they told BRAC to test them with some questions. They altered a graphic and tweaked a speech and double checked the time for each presentation.

That was the dress rehearsal. "BRAC" actually was congressional staffers, and the delegation - Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins; Reps. Tom Allen and Mike Michaud - stopped now and then to critique each other's presentations, slicing away redundancy, emotion-laden rhetoric and various threads of inaccuracy to construct the state's best case for the military facilities. New Hampshire's delegation was there for the Portsmouth argument as they and the governors of both states have been throughout the preparation.

Nothing like a triple death sentence to focus the mind and the political body. The real show is this Wednesday at the Boston Convention Center.

In all three decisions to close or drastically reduce the facilities here, Defense was wildly wrong, the delegation not only charges but assures it will demonstrate. Instead of following the criteria for preserving bases of high military value, the Pentagon "had preconceived notions for an arbitrary budgetary decision," says Sen. Snowe. According to Sen. Collins, it had similar flaws on cost analysis.

For instance, Portsmouth can perform work twice as fast as the three other submarine yards, reducing backlogs and increasing readiness. How is this measured in the closure decisions? It isn't, the delegation says. How is the increased backlog at the other bases measured if Portsmouth is closed? Not there. And by working at or near capacity the remaining bases could not accommodate a surge in demand, a criterion added specifically to this round of closures.

Or take Brunswick. According to the Defense plan, it will remain open but its airplanes and crews will be sent to Florida, from which they will patrol the North Atlantic, a three-hour security delay when minutes matter. And Washington knows they matter, which is why since 2000 Brunswick has received \$120 million in upgrades, including a new runway and tower, new housing and facilities for the next generation of P-3 planes that are there now.

DFAS in Limestone makes even more sense to keep open. In the Defense Department scorebook, it lost points for not being securely on a military base, but it is on a former base that still has a guarded entrance, a perimeter fence and buffer zone. Bottom line economically - this is about accounting, after all - the Pentagon's consolidation plans for DFAS measured only the aggregate savings of merging most of the facilities at three major centers. But running the numbers on each of the facilities compared with the merged services shows Limestone to be considerably less costly. If anything, it should be gaining work instead of losing it.

So there you have it: substantial deviations from the criteria established for this painful process and strong military and cost arguments for Maine to keep its facilities open. The BRAC commission is going to hear similar cases countless times as it travels the country this summer, some of which will be mere local loyalty, but if the Maine delegation is right about the serious mistakes in the Pentagon's analyses, that crescendo of protest is much more than that.

It is not possible that in the decision to close 33 major bases, reduce 29 more and eliminate

hundreds of small installations, Defense erred only when looking here. If any delegation can demonstrate the Defense Department fixed the facts around the policy of saving money regardless of military value, the entire BRAC round is suspect. That is a difficult idea for Congress to consider before Sept. 8, the day the commission reports its findings to the president.

The alternative, however, is worse because the alternative is to close bases with high military value. "The only way our enemies can succeed is if we forget the lessons of September the 11th," President Bush said earlier this week. "For the sake of our nation's security, this will not happen on my watch." Good. One of the lessons of Sept. 11 was that the speed, jointness, knowledge and precision endorsed for the military by Secretary Rumsfeld should not be limited to fighting wars but should permeate the military, including in the shipyards and airfields it chooses to preserve, and in the process it uses to preserve them.

The presentation Maine makes Wednesday in Boston is important for this state and it is crucial to the value of the BRAC process. If the delegation can knock holes in Defense's arguments the way it says it can, the whole thing should fall down.

Base Panel Letter Stirs Hope On Portsmouth Chairman Asks Rumsfeld To Explain Closure Choice

The Boston Globe (Boston, MA)
Bryan Bender and Matthew Viser
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON The chairman of the commission reviewing the Pentagon's list of military base closures yesterday indicated that the panel is considering overturning Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's proposal to shutter Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and instead recommending that a shipyard in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, close.

A letter from Anthony Principi, chairman of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure

Commission, asks Rumsfeld to explain why he has recommended closing Portsmouth in Kittery, Maine, given that the Navy's own data show it is more efficient than the Pearl Harbor shipyard.

Rumsfeld in May proposed closing Portsmouth and 32 other major facilities across the country, prompting officials from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts to lobby the independent review panel to save the shipyard and its 4,400 employees. The panel will make final recommendations to President Bush in September. Under federal law, Bush, and later Congress, can either approve or reject the entire list, but cannot make any changes to it.

Principi's letter also suggested the commission was leaning the other way on Naval Air Station Brunswick in Maine, inquiring why it was not recommended for outright closure instead of a downsizing that would shift 2,420 jobs, more than half the workforce there. He said a complete closure would save almost \$1 billion over two decades, four times as much money as the proposed downsizing.

Raising questions that could directly affect Massachusetts, Principi asked Rumsfeld whether he had consulted state authorities and considered the impact on homeland defense before recommending the closing and restructuring of many Air National Guard bases around the country, including Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod.

If the nine-member commission overturns any of Rumsfeld's recommendations, base-closure specialists say, it will have to first identify other bases to close in order to achieve the overall savings goal of \$50 billion over two decades. Principi's letter triggers the start of a 15-day period for the Pentagon to make its case before a different base is added to the list.

"There appears to be sufficient excess capacity . . . to close either Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor or Naval Shipyard Portsmouth," Principi said in the letter, which asked the Pentagon to back up a series of its recommendations. "Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor is less efficient than Naval

Shipyard Portsmouth, according to Department of the Navy data."

In addition, Principi added, "Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor has low military value compared to other shipyards, according to [Department of Defense] analysis supporting the recommendation to close Naval Shipyard Portsmouth."

Local officials expressed cautious optimism that Principi's letter is evidence that the case for saving Portsmouth has gained strength.

"The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is the best performing shipyard of its kind," Senator Olympia J. Snowe, a Maine Republican, said in a statement. "The questions that the BRAC Commission is asking go to the heart of our defense of the Portsmouth: that the other shipyards are simply not as efficient, and they will not be able to absorb the workload from Portsmouth."

Retired Navy Captain William D. McDonough, a former commander of the shipyard and leader of the Save Our Shipyard Campaign, said he was pleased the commission asked Rumsfeld to further explain his decision.

"If his case is for saving money, it doesn't make sense to close the one that is saving the most money," McDonough said. "It's more efficient, it saves money, and it saves operating time if you send a ship to Portsmouth instead of someone else."

Pentagon documents show Portsmouth was pitted against three other shipyards as the Pentagon came up with its recommendations: Puget Sound in Bremerton, Wash.; Norfolk in Virginia; and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The Pentagon decided Puget Sound and Norfolk had to stay open because they were so large that neither Portsmouth nor Pearl Harbor could do the work, according to documents the Pentagon originally provided the commission.

In an analysis of "military value," Portsmouth scored marginally higher than Pearl Harbor, but because Hawaii is strategically located in the

Pacific, where there is more Navy ship traffic, the military chose to close Portsmouth.

A report released yesterday by the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, also questioned the Pentagon's plan to close Portsmouth. The GAO said the Navy did not take into account that Portsmouth workers are repairing ships for \$54 million less on average than the other shipyards, because they complete repairs faster.

Meanwhile, Principi also raised the prospect the Pentagon's decision to close Otis would be reassessed before the commission completes its work, which includes a public hearing in Boston on Wednesday.

While not mentioning Otis in particular, Principi's request for additional information questioned the Pentagon's overall decision to close and realign numerous Air National Guard bases.

"Were the Adjutant Generals [of the state National Guards] and governors of the states consulted in the re-allocation of aircraft, personnel, facilities and missions from their states?" Principi asked. "What impact does the realignment of the [Air National Guard] have on the homeland defense and homeland security missions? Many of these aircraft will relocate to other locations, which may negatively impact personnel recruiting and retention as well as State and Homeland Security Missions."

Massachusetts lawmakers have warned that closing Otis could leave the Boston area with just two F-15's on alert stationed within a 175-mile radius, compared with 63 patrolling Washington, D.C., and 38 covering New York. Under the Pentagon proposal, the 12 F-15s at Otis would be relocated to Florida and New Jersey.

The GAO report also said the Pentagon did not take the Coast Guard Air Station on Cape Cod into account. The report said that if Otis closed, it would cost \$17 million more annually for the Coast Guard to remain, which could encourage the Coast Guard to relocate.

The Coast Guard, too, is challenging the Pentagon's proposal to shut down Otis, according to the Associated Press. The acting Coast Guard commandant, Vice Admiral Terry M. Cross, said in a letter to lawmakers released yesterday that there is no funding in the Coast Guard's budget to take over the costs of operating the Cape Cod station if the Air Guard leaves.

New London not on list of bases that could escape closure

Gannett News Service (New London, CT)
Katherine Hutt Scott
July 2, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Naval Submarine Base New London was not included on a preliminary list released Friday of bases that could be spared from this year's round of base closings.

The list was compiled by the independent Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission, which is reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations for closing and reorganizing individual military bases.

One analyst said the omission of New London from the list could doom the base to closure.

"I think the BRAC commission decided it was not a close call," said John Pike of GlobalSecurity.org, a defense analysis firm. "If you're not on (Friday's) list, it's not going to change."

Pike said the only exception would be small closures or reorganizations. New London would be a major closure.

John Markowicz, chairman of a southeastern Connecticut group that is trying to save the submarine base, shrugged off the importance of the BRAC commission list.

"The only subtract list I'm interested in being on is the one that's getting submitted on Sept. 8," Markowicz said. Sept. 8 is the BRAC commission's deadline to produce a final list of

base closures and reorganizations to President Bush.

Also Friday, the Government Accountability Office released a report saying that closing New London could hinder the Navy's submarine training program.

The report says Navy officials apparently didn't take into account the time needed to move the New London base's submarine school to Kings Bay Submarine Base in Georgia.

"The BRAC Commission may want to assure itself that the Navy has developed a transition plan to satisfy the training and certification requirements...without unduly interrupting the training pipeline," the report recommended.

The report appears to provide little other ammunition for those fighting the Pentagon's recommendation to close the base in Groton.

The GAO said defense officials might have overestimated the amount of money they would save -- about \$50 billion over 20 years -- by closing 33 bases around the country and reorganizing others. But the agency concluded that the Pentagon's process for deciding which bases to close "was generally logical, reasoned, and well documented."

Political and business leaders in Connecticut have challenged the department's justification for shutting down the Groton base and moving its operations to the Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia and the Kings Bay base in Georgia. Pentagon officials estimate the closing would cost 8,457 jobs.

The report simply repeated the Navy's analysis that New London has a lower military value than other East Coast submarine bases and that its closure was the only option that would reduce capacity and save money.

The BRAC commission will hold a hearing on the Pentagon's recommendations in Boston on Wednesday.

Some perspective offered on BRAC proposals to relocate

St. Louis Countian (St. Louis, MO)

Mike Trask

July 2, 2005

The possibility that several thousand jobs in the St. Louis region could be lost because of the Pentagon's recommendations concerning the closure and relocation of military facilities here has brought both Republican and Democratic politicians together to lobby against those recommendations.

Last month, the national Base Realignment and Closure Commission held a hearing in St. Louis to discuss the recommendations. The commission is scheduled to give its report on the recommendations to President George W. Bush by September.

"In terms of the overall issue of the BRAC, . . . we certainly applaud the efforts of the bistate congressional delegation and the two governors, and we are supporting their efforts and taking our lead from their efforts," said Dick Fleming, president and chief executive officer of the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association.

The defense industry and the military have long been a very important part of the St. Louis region's economy.

Boeing Co.'s St. Louis-based Integrated Defense Systems employs about 15,500 workers here and has an annual economic impact in the region of approximately \$7.13 billion. Scott Air Force Base in Illinois with about 12,600 civilian and military employees has a \$2 billion economic impact to the region, according to figures compiled by RCGA.

By comparison, the U.S. Army Human Resources Command in Overland, which is slated to be relocated to Fort Knox, Ky., has 1,943 employees. The RCGA has calculated its economic impact to the region at slightly more than \$119 million. The Missouri Air National Guard, also scheduled to be relocated out of the

region, has some 234 employees and an economic impact of \$15.2 million.

The possible closing of these military facilities in St. Louis needs to be put in perspective.

Closing Ford Co.'s automotive assembly plant in Hazelwood, which still is a possibility, would have a much greater impact on the region's economy. Both the Army's personnel center in Overland and the Ford plant in Hazelwood are important parts of the area's economy, said Bryan Bezold, the RCGA's chief economist.

But "the thing you have to keep in mind is that when you compare a manufacturing facility with a military facility, the difference is with a manufacturing facility you will get firms to locate here to supply raw materials to the [manufacturing] plant," Bezold said.

"Military bases, although they are important parts of the region's economy, they don't demand those kinds of raw material inputs because they are not involved in a productive venture. So they have a different impact in the sense that there are not as many jobs to support their business operations. There are, of course, going to be jobs supported by those employees' household spending, but the pure military bases have a different impact than a manufacturing operation like Ford's Hazelwood plant," he said.

Before cutting one of its shifts at the beginning of this year, the Ford plant had about 2,600 employees and had an annual economic impact of between \$2.5 billion and \$3 billion, Bezold said.

Fleming noted that when McDonnell-Douglas Corp., now a unit of Boeing, laid off thousands of its St. Louis workers in the early 1990s, hundreds of those people started their own businesses and gradually added employees. That probably wouldn't be the case now because while those civilians who work at military facilities here have professional skills, they have skills that suited to call centers or financial services firms already operating. He mentioned MasterCard and CitiMortgage as possible employers.

Nevertheless, if state and federal officials from Missouri and Illinois are unsuccessful in saving the military facilities mentioned above, "I'm sure the entire community would work very hard to identify opportunities for [the laid-off workers] in the private sector," Fleming said.

**Pope AFB may yet face closure;
Facility adjacent to Fort Bragg has 6,400
personnel. Fate is unclear until late fall**

The News & Observer (Raleigh, North Carolina)
Jay Price
July 2, 2005

The federal military base closing commission signaled Friday that it might recommend closing Pope Air Force base in Fayetteville.

The military is in the midst of a complex process for closing bases across the nation, and the final list might not be set until late fall.

State and local officials were relieved May 13 when the initial list of bases recommended for closure or restructuring omitted any major facilities here. Of the state's 115,000 military jobs, it was to lose just 600.

That list, though, was the Pentagon's proposal. The presidentially appointed Base Realignment and Closure Commission is now trying to decide what changes to make to that list before passing it to President Bush.

On the Pentagon's list, the 6,400 personnel at Pope --- which is adjacent to the Army's Fort Bragg --- would have been reduced by about 4,800. Many of the aircraft would be sent elsewhere, and the base would be placed under control of Fort Bragg. Bragg, though, would have gained nearly enough jobs to balance the losses at Pope.

On Friday, commission Chairman Anthony J. Principi sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asking why the Pentagon hadn't recommended closing Pope and whether Bragg's needs for aircraft couldn't be met from other air bases. Under base closing rules, the

commission has to ask the Pentagon's reasoning on a given recommendation before the commission can change it.

Commission spokesmen didn't return calls Friday afternoon.

The letter surprised Pope and state officials. Troy Pate of Goldsboro, co-chairman of the North Carolina Advisory Commission on Military Affairs, said it was puzzling, especially given that Pope already would be trimmed under the Pentagon's proposal, and that Bragg's 18th Airborne Corps needs access to aircraft for training and deployment. "It's kind of hard to second guess 'em to see what they're looking for," Pate said.

Potential changes

The nine-member commission will discuss potential changes at a hearing July 19. If seven or more want to add Pope to the closure list, Principi wrote, at least two commissioners would have to visit the base, and there would have to be a public hearing on the closure.

Then, at the commission's final deliberations in mid-August, at least seven would have to vote to add it to the closure list.

Even then, the list isn't final. It goes to Bush by Sept. 8. He has until Sept. 23 to endorse it without modification or send it back to the commission for changes. If he accepts the list, Congress must either accept or reject it.

Base officials aren't allowed to comment on most aspects of the closing process.

Capt. Khalid Cannon, a Pope spokesman, said simply that he hadn't heard anything about the letter and couldn't speculate on what it meant for Pope.

"We'll just have to wait for the final recommendations," he said.

Panel seeks more data on Maine bases;

The base-closing commission wants to know why the Navy would keep BNAS open without planes.

Portland Press Herald (Portland, ME)

Bart Jansen

July 2, 2005

The military base-closure commission wants the Pentagon to give the panel more information about the possibility of closing Brunswick Naval Air Station instead of keeping it open without planes or crews. Supporters of the base said the request should not be a cause for alarm. The response might actually help them preserve the base, they said, because it should highlight the base's strategic value in the Northeast.

"We will make the case that the Department of Defense dismissed and rejected the notion of closure," said Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine. "Then they scrambled to come up with an alternative, which was realignment, and that will not withstand any scrutiny."

In its written request, the commission also asked for information about the decisions to recommend closure of two other Maine installations, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery and the Defense Finance Accounting Service center in Limestone.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission plans a hearing on Maine's bases Wednesday in Boston.

The commission is reviewing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's recommendations to realign Brunswick, with a loss of 2,420 jobs in Maine, and close the Kittery shipyard, with 4,510 jobs, and the finance center in Limestone, with 361 jobs.

The nine-member commission must give President Bush its final closure list by Sept. 8. Bush and Congress can either accept or reject the list, but not change it.

The question about Brunswick hits the crucial point about the base, which is its location as the only active air base on the East Coast north of Virginia.

The Navy initially considered closing the base, according to a report released Friday by the Government Accountability Office. But because of the strategic value of runways in the Northeast, the Pentagon decided instead to move its P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft to Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida and keep Brunswick for reserve training and future use.

Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, wrote to Rumsfeld noting that closing Brunswick would save four times as much money and open the land for community or state redevelopment.

The request will make the Pentagon explain why the runways are so valuable that the Navy sought to keep them even as it searched for ways to save money.

Snowe argued that the review would highlight Brunswick's importance.

"The only option is to maintain Brunswick as a fully manned and operational site so that we have a facility in the Northeast that can respond at a moment's notice," Snowe said.

Rick Tetrev, chairman of the task force that is advocating keeping the base fully staffed, said the request is no cause for alarm.

"I don't think it's reason to worry," Tetrev said. "We're making our case and they're listening. I think that is good."

In reference to the Kittery shipyard, Principi asked why Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii wasn't closed instead. Pearl Harbor is the Maine yard's nearest rival in the base-closure round and it has "a slightly lower military value score," according to the GAO report.

Top Navy officials have insisted that Pearl Harbor's location in the Pacific is too valuable to lose, and that the yard can handle aircraft carriers, which Portsmouth Naval Shipyard can't.

Principi also asked why the Pentagon sought to consolidate 26 offices of the Defense Finance

and Accounting Service, including one in Limestone, to three locations, in Denver, Columbus and Indianapolis.

Limestone advocates contend that a strong local work force and low operating costs mean the Maine office should expand, not close.

Cleveland officials encouraged by letter to defense secretary

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Cleveland, OH)
July 4, 2005

Officials trying to save a military payroll office in Cleveland say they are hopeful a letter sent Friday to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld will help their cause.

Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, asked Rumsfeld in the letter if keeping Defense Finance and Accounting Service offices open in Columbus, Indianapolis and Denver and closing all other DFAS outposts was the only option considered.

The Department of Defense in May proposed shuttering the Cleveland DFAS office and shifting about 1,000 jobs to other cities. The Pentagon also recommended that 1,758 jobs be added to the Defense Supply Center in Columbus and suburban Whitehall, which includes a DFAS operation.

"Why did DoD not consider other options, which could have avoided military construction costs and possibly produced a more cost effective option?" Principi wrote in the seven-page letter.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission is expected to send its decisions to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton, a member of the commission, toured the DFAS office in Cleveland in June with Gov. Bob Taft and hometown members of Congress.

Parts of Principi's letter could be a result of a presentation made to Newton during his visit, said Fred Nance, chairman of the Cleveland Defense Industry Alliance, a lobbying group.

"I know a lot better than to count chickens before they're hatched, but yes, I am encouraged," he said.

U.S. Reps. Dennis Kucinich and Stephanie Tubbs Jones, both Democrats, said the letter is a good sign.

"The fact the letter was sent, asking for an explanation, indicates we have hope," Kucinich said. "This is so important to Cleveland. We have so much at stake."

Supporters of the Cleveland DFAS office have argued the Pentagon's analysis did not consider some critical operations performed by the office and costs to expand other DFAS facilities.

The commission will conduct a public hearing on July 19 in Washington.

Nance said they are gathering more data supporting their case to present to the commission.

The Pentagon says it will save \$49 billion over 20 years by streamlining services across the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and shutting down bases deemed inefficient.

Rep. Pearce: Research lab move could be costly

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (White Sands Missile Range, NM)
July 4, 2005

The Pentagon's recommendation to move the Army Research Laboratory from White Sands Missile Range to Maryland could prove costly, Rep. Steve Pearce said.

"I think it's going to create a higher operating expense rather than a neutral one," Pearce, R-N.M., said.

The laboratory was on the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure list. But instead of recommending the lab close, as the Pentagon recommended for Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, it's recommending that the lab be moved to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The Pentagon's recommendations are being reviewed by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Its decisions are due to be delivered to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president then can decide to accept or reject the list in its entirety.

The consolidation of laboratories would provide greater synergy across technical disciplines, according to the Pentagon, and create an annual savings of \$41 million a year after moving costs are paid over four years.

Pearce said those projected savings don't seem realistic.

Although the proposal calls for 178 jobs to be moved, which would include the lab's entire work force, the proposal calls for leaving a minimum detachment to maintain the test and evaluation functions.

The exact number is still being worked out, said Brig. Gen. Robert P. Reese, White Sands commander.

"They'll keep whatever size team here we need to continue our testing, so we don't believe that ... any programs will fail to test at White Sands," Reese said. "Our goal is to change as necessary to remain relevant and ready."

Pearce said living and operating costs would be higher in Maryland.

At a hearing last week in Clovis, state officials asked BRAC commissioners to take the lab move off the list.

Commissioner Philip Coyle acknowledged some of the lab's testing would require open spaces available only at White Sands, which might require some staff to travel from Maryland back to New Mexico.

Moving the lab would also cost New Mexico State University about \$10 million a year in research grants, said Don Birx, director of the school's Physical Science Laboratory. "That's about 7 percent of the university's total," he said.

"The work that ARL (Army Research Laboratory) is doing is some of the most advanced that is going on at White Sands Missile Range," Birx said. "It's a very significant part of the research at NMSU."

All of the jobs at the lab are filled locally, Reese said.

"That's one of the reasons why losing an element like ARL is difficult for a community like ours," he said.

Pearce said he would continue to fight for keeping the laboratory at White Sands and would, if necessary, step up recruiting to bring more jobs to the area.

"Only 15 percent of these cases are ever reversed, so we know it's a very steep hill we have to climb," he said.

Shipyard's Fate Hangs In Balance Tomorrow

Union Leader (NH)
Jerry Miller
July 5, 2005

KITTERY, Maine — The fate of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard could be decided tomorrow, when four members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission hold a hearing in Boston to decide whether to accept the Pentagon's recommendation that the shipyard be closed.

The session, set for 1 p.m. at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, is one of four hearings at the same location tomorrow. Each hearing will be crucial to determining the fate of other military bases in New England, including the U.S. Submarine Base at Groton, Conn., Brunswick Naval Air Station in Maine and the

Defense Finance Accounting Service center in northern Maine.

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the nation's oldest Navy base, is one of 33 military facilities nationwide recommended for closure by the Department of Defense; officials project its closing would save \$1.3 billion over 20 years.

New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch contends the actual cost to close Portsmouth would be 10 times more than the Pentagon estimates, reducing the amount of savings to taxpayers.

"The hearing is exceptionally important," William McDonough, retired Navy captain and former shipyard commander, said yesterday. "This is our opportunity to present our case to four commissioners."

McDonough said in past closure rounds, commission members have considered community support as a factor in the decision-making process.

He said he hopes as many as 3,400 shipyard supporters — including hundreds of shipyard employees expected to take a day of leave — will journey to Boston for the hearing. The convention center holds an estimated 4,000. To help people get there, the Seacoast Shipyard Association has rented 75 buses. McDonough serves as spokesman for the grassroots group, whose mission is to keep the yard open.

Fifteen buses will leave the Pan American Airways parking lot, at the Pease International Tradeport, at 10 a.m., while an estimated 60 will depart Walker Street and Route 1 in Kittery, at the same hour. Buses can be boarded at both locations beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The Portsmouth hearing is expected to involve all members of the New Hampshire and Maine Congressional delegations, each of whom will present data illustrating how the Pentagon engaged in "substantial deviation" from the eight criteria needed to recommend a base for closure.

No one from the shipyard will be allowed to speak, including members of the command staff.

McDonough said the shipyard will also have two retired admirals speaking on its behalf.

McDonough declined to name them, but did identify one as a former high-ranking official involved with the operation of the Atlantic fleet.

"We have some good horsepower there," he said.

Shipyard supporters received a boost last week when commission Chairman Anthony Principi wrote to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asking the defense chief to explain why he recommended the closure of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, rather than the Pearl Harbor facility.

According to Principi, Navy data shows Portsmouth operates more efficiently than Pearl Harbor.

"There appears to be sufficient excess capacity . . . to close either Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor or Naval Shipyard Portsmouth," Principi wrote in his letter. "Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor is less efficient than Naval Shipyard Portsmouth, according to Department of the Navy data."

A Navy analysis shows Portsmouth ranking somewhat higher than Pearl Harbor in military value, a key criterion, while a recent report from the General Accounting Office, an arm of Congress, also raised questions about the Pentagon's recommendation that Portsmouth be closed.

According to the GAO report, the Navy, in making its recommendation, failed to take into account the fact that Portsmouth workers are making repairs at a savings of \$54 million per vessel and are getting the job done more quickly than workers at other shipyards.

"Based on past performance, everything the Navy is predicting as savings can't be done," McDonough said.

The nation has four remaining nuclear Navy shipyards, whose work involves the repair,

maintenance and refueling of the submarine fleet. While Portsmouth serves the Los Angeles Class Fleet of submarines, the other yards, in Bremerton, Wash., Norfolk, Va., and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, also serve surface ships.

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard employs more than 4,400 civilian workers from New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts. The yard's economic impact, including wages, on New Hampshire and Maine exceeds \$250 million per year.

Opinions/ Editorials

Base realignment equals confusion

Joplin Globe (Joplin, MO)

Kelley Dull

June 3, 2005

DFAS workers have good reason to be nervous — and so should American taxpayers — With the state of our military very much on the minds of Americans these days, the process known as Base Realignment and Closure has taken on added importance. The outcome of this process will determine the shape of the U.S. military in the coming years; the communities that will have bases and installations; and the functions performed at each site.

When we think of the military's most crucial functions, what comes to mind are soldiers and sailors, and the weapons they need to wage war. But in a battlescape such as the one in which our military finds itself today, the office operations are nearly as critical, given the unprecedented number of contractors hired for the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention the treasure of taxpayer dollars devoted to those contracts.

Extraordinary

carelessness

So it is most troubling to find that the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) have been made in an extraordinary careless and confusing manner. One might even

call the BRAC recommendations for DFAS — part of an overall BRAC scheme for the military that will be either accepted or rejected by a commission appointed by the president and Congress — an example of management incompetence. With the BRAC commission limited to either accepting or rejecting the Defense Department's BRAC recommendation "in toto," such incompetence and confusion should leave the entire recommendation dead in the water, further forestalling any positive change that could have come out of the BRAC process.

In its detailed recommendation to the BRAC commission, the Pentagon recommends moving accounting functions from Columbus to Denver or Indianapolis, then from Denver to Columbus or Indianapolis, then from Indianapolis to Columbus or Denver. Likewise, the recommendation states that commercial pay functions should be moved from Indianapolis to Columbus, then from Columbus to Indianapolis. It's like the Abbott and Costello "Who's on first?" routine, only, this time, Lou Costello is running operations for the Defense Department. Lives are at stake

Meanwhile, real lives are at stake. Among the most confounding of the Department of Defense recommendations are those concerning the number of civilian employees to be retained after the DFAS realignment.

On the spreadsheet included with the recommendation, the Pentagon shows the movement of some 4,500 civilian jobs out of their current locations, and the elimination of nearly 1,100 other civilian positions. Yet another part of the recommendation document appears to call for moving some 6,270 civilian jobs.

Today, as they tend to the work of getting our soldiers paid on time and maintaining the Defense Department's cash flow, DFAS employees are wondering whether their jobs are on the block, whether they're moving to Columbus or Indianapolis, or whether any recommendation accepted by the BRAC Commission will be implemented by DFAS as described to the commission.

DFAS workers have good reason to be nervous — and so should the American taxpayer. The agency for which they work has a history of handing over jobs to private contractors in clear violation of federal policy, while the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) looks the other way. In 2004, DFAS privatized technical support services for its own staff without any formal effort to assess any security concerns regarding the access to the Pentagon's electronic finance system by private corporations (many of which have lately shown a propensity for "losing" sensitive data). In fact, DFAS actually claimed that it had never provided "help desk" technical support to its workers, in clear violation of the truth.

This followed a 2003 incident in which DFAS gave federal employee jobs to a contractor — despite the fact that the price for the contractor's services was more than \$30 million above the cost of keeping the work in-house.

Well-being of our children

Like all Americans, employees of the Department of Defense want to be part of an efficient and superior military system that ensures the well-being of their children and grandchildren. But reading the Pentagon's sloppy and confusing recommendations for the future of its own finance agency, one has to wonder if its leaders share that goal.

Kelley Dull is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, and president of Defense Finance and Accounting Services Council on the Base Realignment and Closure procedures in Washington, D.C.

Sub base reckoning

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)

June 3, 2005

We've got the right people in place to argue that the Department of Defense was wrong in recommending that the U.S. Navy Submarine Base at Groton be closed.

They will make their pitch Wednesday morning before four members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

It's been seven weeks since the Department of Defense stunned the region with news that it intends to close Groton and relocate its subs and personnel to the Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia and the Kings Bay Submarine Base in Georgia.

It's been just three weeks, however, since the Pentagon answered the subpoena of U.S. Sens. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, and released data vital to grasp the reasoning behind its base-closure decisions.

John Markowicz is chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition. He and his cohorts on the coalition have been working for two years in anticipation of the May 13 decision.

They well understand the argument that must be made, an argument focused on the military value of the Groton base. Markowicz and coalition members successfully overturned the 1993 BRAC decision to close Groton.

At the May 31 meeting with the Bulletin's editorial board, BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said to Markowicz -- retired Navy captain, veteran of 30 years in the submarine service -- "We need to hear from people like you."

And hear they will. While the BRAC hearing is Wednesday, Markowicz and the coalition will be in touch with the commission's staff until the week of Aug. 23 when the commission will conclude its gathering of information.

Potentially huge losses

If the Navy pulls out of Groton, several thousand jobs would be lost and Connecticut's economy would be damaged to the tune of some \$3 billion annually.

That's a scary prospect -- but it's a prospect that carries no weight with the BRAC panel. Nor does any appraisal of projected submarine numbers; that would be a policy decision. The

nine members of that panel are charged with weighing the military value of a base. Period.

Military value considers the joint readiness of a base, its assets -- in the case of Groton, its piers, the submarine school, the proximity of sub builder Electric Boat, the cost to clean up a century of contamination.

Well represented
Groton, the region and Connecticut will be represented. Gov. M. Jodi Rell and members of our congressional delegation will speak. Retired Vice Adm. Al Konetzi, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy George Sawyer and Electric Boat President John Casey will present a strategic overview. Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Gina McCarthy will discuss environmental remediation. Markowicz and Gabe Stern of the Subbase Realignment Coalition will deliver the military-value argument.

And just what does the Pentagon reckon would be the outcome of closing Groton?

Savings of \$1.6 billion over 20 years, after an initial outlay of \$690 million to close it and relocate submarines, the submarine school, equipment and personnel to Norfolk and Kings Bay.

The Pentagon ranked Groton last in its assessments of sub bases. How it reached that conclusion is a mystery. Much of its methodology is flawed, guesswork or based on data that have not been revealed.

No points for piers
Groton got no points for its piers but Kings Bay did. Kings Bay has fewer piers than Groton and all were built to accommodate Tridents, not fast-attack subs like those stationed at Groton.

The Navy puts the cost of the environmental cleanup of Groton at \$29 million.

The cost of cleaning up the former Norwich Hospital has been estimated in the \$40-million range, and the cost of cleaning up the sub base could be three times that. U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd

said that anyone who believes Groton can be cleaned up for \$29 million "is living in Disneyland."

It takes two hours for a sub to leave Groton and reach open water of diving depth. At Kings Bay, it takes 12 hours because the subs must traverse the inland waterway to reach the ocean.

It's up to our spokesmen and women to convince the panel that the Pentagon's recommendation "substantially deviates" from the selection criteria or conflicts with the Pentagon's 20-year force structure plan.

A fair shake
There is every reason to believe Groton will get a fair shake. Four members of the BRAC Commission -- Principi, James Bilbray, Lloyd Newton and Philip Coyle -- visited the sub base May 31 and June 1.

On Wednesday in Boston, Principi, Newton and Bilbray will be joined by retired Air Force Gen. Sue Ellen Turner.

In all, five members of the BRAC Commission will have visited Groton or been part of the hearing in Boston. Whether that is significant remains to be seen.

Five votes are needed to remove a base from the BRAC list.

As noted, while the formal presentation is Wednesday, the Subbase Realignment Coalition will be in touch with BRAC staffers until late August.

Navy School Ripe For Multi-Use Development

Athens Banner-Herald (Athens, GA)

Don Nelson

July 5, 2005

Fortunately for the Athens community, there are several dedicated and hard-working individuals who think it's possible to convince Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Department of Defense and the Base Realignment and Closure

Commission that a mistake has been made in targeting the U.S. Navy Supply Corps School for relocation from the Classic City to Rhode Island.

Folks like Jimbo LaBoon, George Huban and Len Sopera will stay the course on Athens' behalf until the BRAC process ends.

The Defense Department claims it can save more than a million dollars a year over a 20-year period by moving the Navy Supply School to a Navy base in Rhode Island. Would it surprise you to learn that the department has some polluted swamp land to market as well?

Surely a financial analysis comparing the Athens Navy operation with what it would cost in Rhode Island could uncover some error in the figures and make a sound case for keeping the Navy school here.

Failing to do that or to come up with some other equally compelling argument to keep the Navy school anchored in the economic, educational and cultural hub of Northeast Georgia, a Plan B has been unveiled by the Athens-Clarke County Commission.

Earlier this year, the Athens-Clarke mayor and commissioners, under guidelines mandated by the federal government, appointed a 16-member redevelopment authority to consider and recommend new uses for the 58-acre tract of land where the Navy school now sits.

The possibilities are limitless and could include anything from another University of Georgia facility to a gated single-family development. One of the looming questions will be whether to let the property remain in the public domain, exempt from property tax, or to move it into private hands where the county would benefit from the property tax.

Currently, the 58 acres are zoned for government use and appraised at \$ 65,525,000. If the property were taxed at the standard 40-percent-of-value rate, the evaluation would come to \$ 26,208,000 and the annual taxes would amount to \$ 868,795.20, according to the

ACC tax assessors office. More than likely, if the land were rezoned, commercial or residential for example, the value of the land would appreciate, as would the annual tax.

Countless opportunities present themselves for redeveloping the Navy school land, but one of the more sensible concepts involves creating a privately developed mixed-used environment that would tie into the nearby medical community. The Navy school already has functioned more or less as a mixed-used community with housing, classrooms, even a retail store for base personnel. But on a grander scale, those 58 acres could house single-family homes, condominiums, affordable multi-housing units, retail shops, medical offices, training facilities, a hotel, park land and more. Let's think high-tech development here as well.

The authority should also emphasize the historical significance found in several of the Navy school's facilities and should try to ensure the preservation of those structures.

If the Navy school in Athens does remain on the BRAC list for relocation, local authorities can follow the federal government's standard script about redeveloping bases, according to Chicago-based writer H. Lee Murphy in an article for Primedia Business Magazines & Media Inc.

The first act involves the establishment of the redevelopment authority, which Athens-Clarke officials have done. Next, the appointed group must create a master plan for the land, and at some point, the feds will deed the property to the redevelopment authority, Murphy explained.

As stewards of the abandoned base property, the authority can take bids from developers or various parties, depending on what the master plan outlines.

Though the proceeds from the sale of the land could be used by the redevelopment authority for infrastructure needs, it will be interesting to find out how else that money might be applied.

Should the BRAC process end up with the Navy school sailing away from Athens, we will

depend on the redevelopment authority to exercise visionary leadership in finding uses for the land that might bring even greater economic prosperity to our community.

Governor, senators take NIMBY stand

The Issue: Elected officials rally to try to save Willow Grove Naval Air Station from closure.

Our Opinion: Bases should be closed, and that means some areas are going to have to take an economic hit.

Reading Eagle (Reading, PA)

July 05, 2005

Former House Speaker Thomas “Tip” O’Neil, a Massachusetts Democrat, once claimed, “All politics is local.” Perhaps the perfect example of that came in the wake of the recommendations made by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission on the closing of military bases across the country.

Virtually all Americans believe there are military installations that should be closed, but they almost all agree that those closures should take place in someone else’s region.

Hence we are experiencing an unusual political alliance as Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, teams up with Republican Sens. Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum as well as Republican Rep. Curt Weldon to try to prevent the closure of Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base.

It is an example of NIMBYism — not in my back yard — being played on a national level.

According to the quartet of Pennsylvania politicians, the closure of Willow Grove, as recommended earlier this year by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, would cost the commonwealth more than 7,200 jobs and have a regional economic impact of more than \$378 mil-lion annually.

Those are negative numbers that no elected official would want associated with his name, especially if he is up for re-election next year, as is the case with Rendell, Santorum and Weldon.

As a result, the elected officials have joined forces in an effort to convince the Defense Department that Willow Grove is critical to national security.

A cynic might suggest that the base is more critical to job security of the elected officials who are trying to save it than it is national security.

Nevertheless, Rendell and company are trying to make the claim that the military is not fully aware of all the activities that take place at Willow Grove, therefore the proposal to close it should be overturned.

Pennsylvania officials are fighting an uphill battle for a couple of reasons.

First, only 15 percent of the recommendations made by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission have been reversed.

Second, this is the second time that Willow Grove has been targeted for closure. The first time was in 1994, when the base-closure process was much more political than it is today.

Christine Kelley Cimko, head of the realignment commission the first time around, told The Philadelphia Inquirer the fact that the Pentagon still believes Willow Grove is no longer needed is a grave omen for the base.

Nevertheless, the elected officials are claiming Pennsylvania has taken a disproportional hit from base closings and thus Willow Grove should remain operational.

They are arguing that it was categorized primarily as a Naval Reserve base with a reduced mission, when in fact Willow Grove is home to units from the Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army and Air National Guard, one of only three such facilities nationwide.

But rest assured that elected officials who represent the people who live near the other 29 military installations that the commission has proposed be closed are making similar

arguments as to why their facilities should escape the budget axe.

If all of them were to succeed, no bases would be closed and no money would be saved.

We're certainly not faulting Rendell or any of the other elected officials for fighting for the folks here in Pennsylvania. After all, all politics truly is local.

But the simple fact is that the military should be able to best assess its needs, and someone is going to have to take a hit.

Last chance to argue for Maine bases is July 6; Lawmakers and officials face a daunting task in Boston, but they've done their homework.
Portland Press Herald (Portland, ME)
July 3, 2005

In just a few short days, on Wednesday, Maine officials will get their chance to present a case against recommendations for closing and realigning three military facilities in the state.

The stakes at these hearings in Boston, of course, are high. Between the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Brunswick Naval Air Station and the accounting center in Limestone, more than 7,000 jobs could be lost.

Officials and residents from all three areas have waged inspired campaigns to preserve their facilities, but Aroostook County officials deserve high praise for their recent strategy in a meeting with a Base Realignment and Closure Commission member last week. Instead of pleading a case to maintain the Defense Finance and Accounting Center and its more than 350 jobs, county officials lobbied for a "bigger and better" center.

Most important, officials buttressed their argument with solid reasoning. For instance, the present structure underwent a \$6 million renovation four years ago, and can hold hundreds more workers, they argued.

A big factor working against Limestone is its rural location. The Pentagon wants to consolidate its accounting services at three large centers in metropolitan areas: Columbus, Ohio; Denver, Colo. and Indianapolis. To their substantial credit, county officials countered with insightful, persuasive counter-arguments:

- Military jobs are relatively high-paying and highly prized in rural Aroostook County, thus assuring the best applicants from the county's labor pool.

- Job vacancies at the Limestone facility are replaced far more quickly than elsewhere.

- Housing in Aroostook County is inexpensive, removing a significant cost-of-living obstacle that will be faced by potential workers in Columbus, Denver and Indianapolis.

Whether their arguments will hold sway remains to be seen, but Aroostook County was right on target.

Meanwhile, Gov. Baldacci and Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins have compiled what Snowe calls an "excellent case" for the hearing in Boston this week. The three, along with U.S. Rep. Tom Allen, have been rehearsing their presentations. Such practice is well-advised, because Maine's representatives will have just three hours - one hour per base - to plead their case at the hearing.

Much has been made of the looming economic losses, but it is essential Maine's arguments focus on the security and defense value of its three bases.

Additional Notes