

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

July 8, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Base Closing Plan's Legality Is Disputed By Sen. Warner

Unplanned Tour From BRAC Commissioner Could Help Michigan Base's Situation

Senators Question DoD's Reasoning For Base Closings ...

... As Boisterous Crowds Aim To Influence BRAC Decisions

Local News Articles

Base Advocates Cite London (Washington DC)

Pa. Leaders Fight On For Willow Grove (Philadelphia, PA)

State Argues Against Closing Air Wing (Pittsburgh, PA)

State Leaders Object To Plan Moving Military Planes, Jobs (Baltimore, MD)

Va. Officials Point Out Cost Of Closing Fort Monroe (Norfolk, VA)

Sub Base Supporters Are Optimistic (Westerly, RI)

Baldacci: DoD plans would trigger a 'government-induced recession' (Brunswick, ME)

Hawaii leaders emphasize importance of Pearl Harbor shipyard (Pearl Harbor, HI)

Opinions/Editorials

Base Closings Essential

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Base Closing Plan's Legality Is Disputed By Sen. Warner

Washington Post
Spencer S. Hsu
July 8, 2005

Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.) yesterday challenged the legality of a Pentagon plan to move 23,000 military workers away from the close-in Northern Virginia suburbs by 2011 as part of a national defense streamlining proposal.

Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and co-author of the 1990 law guiding the military base closing process, added his influential voice to a chorus of Virginia and

District leaders who testified against the impact of proposed changes at day-long hearings of the Base Closure Realignment Commission.

Warner said Defense officials illegally targeted for relocation military workers in leased office space and in the Missile Defense Agency, Defense Information Systems Agency and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

"I know the law, and I know what Congress intended," said Warner, a former undersecretary of the Navy who has overseen from the Senate all five earlier base-closing rounds. "The goal to vacate leased office space was the guiding principle for many of these recommendations -- not military value, cost savings or any other legislated criteria. This is not permitted by law."

The District, Alexandria and Arlington County would be among the hardest-hit communities under a plan submitted May 13 by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. The plan would shutter defense facilities nationwide to save \$49 billion over 20 years. It calls for the relocation of nearly 6,000 jobs from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington to Bethesda and Fort Belvoir in southeastern Fairfax County.

Beyond the Capital Beltway, Maryland and Virginia would gain more than 20,000 jobs at suburban bases such as Belvoir, Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground, where the Pentagon says security is better and land is federally owned.

The hearings marked the first -- and likely last and best -- opportunity for local leaders to influence the nine-member commission, which is holding 19 such sessions across the country on its way to producing a final list of targeted bases Sept. 8. President Bush and Congress must accept or reject the list in its entirety.

Elected leaders nationwide have protested that the Pentagon did not follow its stated purpose of increasing "military value" in initiating the first round of base closings in 10 years. But District and Virginia speakers -- including Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D), Gov. Mark R. Warner (D) and five members of Congress -- brought

new specificity to their case against Pentagon projections of cost savings and efficiency, saying emergency response in Washington and military research would suffer.

The "recommendation to vacate 8 million square feet of leased space in Northern Virginia is unnecessary for the security of our nation, inordinately expensive, inconsistent with . . . the law and inconsistent with the treatment of leased space in other areas of the country," Gov. Warner said.

Sen. Warner said the Pentagon should have asked Congress for specific authority to make base closing decisions based on the security of workers in leased buildings, whose closure affects about as many people as four major base closings in other states.

In a news conference later, the commission chairman, Anthony J. Principi, said the panel would consider a 36-page report and three legal briefs prepared by Sen. Warner's staff. But he added that past defense secretaries have been criticized for failing to protect troops, and he invoked "this terrible war on terror, and what we saw in London this morning."

"Do we want to establish a double standard, if we don't condone these efforts to establish the same force protection for our civilian workers, federal workers and our scientists in this area?" Principi said.

The Pentagon contends that putting workers in government-owned space will be cheaper in the long run and that the leased buildings in Northern Virginia fail a new security rule requiring structures to be set back 82 feet from traffic to guard against truck bombs.

Virginia officials say the Pentagon understated the costs of new construction, that urban buildings cannot meet the setback requirement and that the Pentagon and other high-security government agencies are not fleeing the capital.

In other testimony, Sen. George Allen (R-Va.) and military experts warned that the moves would erect barriers between researchers who

are now concentrated in Arlington at the National Science Foundation and at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and other military research agencies.

Arlington County Board Chairman Jay Fiset (D) asked the commission to consider moving 2,000 workers in those agencies to one of two Arlington sites that can be developed into secure leased space.

Reps. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.) and Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.) said the Pentagon had unfairly targeted Northern Virginia and was setting itself up to fail.

Moran said Pentagon officials arbitrarily penalized local leased facilities 67 points out of 100 on ratings that are supposed to take into account factors on which the region would score highly, such as access to airports, availability of educated workers and quality of communications infrastructure.

Davis warned that three-fourths of skilled defense workers may simply quit instead of moving, given a local unemployment rate of 2 percent, a huge shortage of private-sector workers with security clearances and a national backlog of people seeking clearances now estimated at 329,000 people.

Earlier, on Capitol Hill, Williams, Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) and other District officials said the Pentagon understated the construction, environmental cleanup and historic preservation costs of moving Walter Reed.

Norton said Walter Reed, which has treated 4,000 wounded soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, serves a homeland security role in the city. "The closure of Walter Reed would . . . cripple the emergency response capabilities of our nation's capital in the event of a major disaster," she said.

Unplanned Tour From BRAC Commissioner Could Help Michigan Base's Situation

InsideDefense.com
Chris Johnson
July 7, 2005

A Michigan congressman has convinced a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to tour the W.K. Kellogg Airport Air Guard Station in Battle Creek, MI, in an effort to reverse the Defense Department's recent recommendation to close the base.

The commission did not schedule the visit before Rep. Joe Schwarz (R-MI) presented his case during a June 15 BRAC hearing in St. Louis, MO. Commissioner Samuel Skinner and Senior Air Force Analyst Kenneth Small agreed to visit the Michigan Air National Guard base on July 29 at Schwarz's request.

"We will continue to press our case that the DOD recommendations made with respect to Battle Creek were made without respect to the true military value of the base, that they do not promote military transformation and that they are not cost effective," Schwarz said in a June 30 statement.

When Schwarz attended the St. Louis hearing, he presented several facts that questioned DOD's expected cost savings. DOD contends that shutting down the Battle Creek station and transferring some of its equipment to another air base in Selfridge, MI, would lead to recurring savings of \$13 million each year and a net present value of savings of \$167 million over 20 years.

Schwarz refuted those numbers by arguing that DOD's plan to move Battle Creek's A-10 ground-attack aircraft to Selfridge would result in a greater expense than the Pentagon thought. Schwarz spokesman Matt Marsden noted that relocating the aircraft to Selfridge would lead to the cost of training new pilots and a one- or two-year wait before the aircraft were capable of being deployed.

"The Defense Department is weakening military value by moving the national guard and retraining pilots," Marsden said. "We believe

that the BRAC Commission will see the wisdom of keeping the A-10s in Battle Creek.”

The Pentagon is already taking some heat for its base closing analysis from the Government Accountability Office, which recently released a report suggesting that DOD used questionable assumptions when projecting the cost savings of closing bases (DefenseAlert, July 1). The report does not analyze the savings that DOD anticipates specifically for the Battle Creek base shutdown, but it does note that DOD may have erred if it believed that it could cut costs by trimming personnel numbers with base closures.

“Claiming such personnel as BRAC savings without reducing end strength does not provide dollar savings that can be reapplied outside personnel accounts and could result in the Air Force having to find other sources of funding for up-front investment costs to implement its BRAC recommendations,” reads the GAO report.

In addition to financial considerations, Marsden said the Pentagon erred in determining the local economic results of shutting down the base. Marsden said that while BRAC predicted initial job growth as a result of implementing the shutdown, those jobs would disappear as soon as the closure was complete.

“In 2006, you may have that gain, but if you look at it from 2006 to 2011, that original number may seem deceiving,” Marsden said.

While other lawmakers are making similar claims about DOD’s numbers to preserve the bases in their districts, Schwarz has already had success in defeating an earlier move to close the base. Marsden claimed credit for Schwarz in preventing the Battle Creek base’s planned shutdown in 1993. At the time, when Schwarz was a Michigan state senator, DOD made a similar recommendation to close the base, but the BRAC Commission rejected the effort.

Senators Question DoD's Reasoning For Base Closings ...
Congress Daily

Megan Scully
July 7, 2005

BOSTON -- Closing Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, as recommended by the Pentagon, would set off a "regional recession" in Maine and neighboring New Hampshire, devastating local economies and putting more than 4,500 highly trained employees out of work, Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, told the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission at Wednesday's New England regional hearing. At stake are some of the largest installations on Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's base-closure list and, lawmakers argued, the future of Navy shipbuilding, training and research in the coastal region. Snowe, along with other lawmakers and shipyard employees, pleaded their case for Portsmouth with precision, using Navy documents and meeting minutes to show what they considered to be major flaws in the Pentagon's decision-making process. For instance, according to a June 22 meeting with lawmakers, Defense Department officials said the decision to close the shipyard was based largely on a planned 18 percent cut in the service's force structure, Portsmouth employee Earl Donnell said during the hearing.

That cut, however, will not occur until 2024, making Portsmouth vital to Navy shipbuilding and maintenance for at least another two decades, he said. By closing down the Maine shipyard, the Navy would overwhelm its other yards at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and Norfolk, Va., prompting maintenance delays for the "aging fleet," Donnell argued. A veteran Portsmouth worker, Donnell and others pointed to the shipyard's reputation for speedy and accurate work -- they overhaul a submarine faster than anyone else, officials argued -- and its highly skilled workforce as major reasons to keep the facility's doors open. "If you close this facility, the people who work here will scatter to the wind," said Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H. "We will lose their talents."

During the lengthy hearing, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, argued the Pentagon "thoroughly disregarded" Portsmouth's efficiency when estimating cost savings generated by closing the

facility. She said the yard turns around many submarines ahead of schedule -- and often several months faster than other shipyards. "Portsmouth never got credit for its efficiencies," she said. Meanwhile, Sen. John Sununu, R-N.H., noted that costs to close the base and move work elsewhere were dramatically understated in the Pentagon's estimates. As such, the Navy would not recoup those costs for 34 years, or three decades later than it anticipates. "No one denies, no one questions, that Portsmouth does the work cheaper," Sununu said. In making their case, lawmakers also pointed to the Pentagon's military-value analysis -- the most important base-closure criteria -- of Portsmouth and other naval facilities. Portsmouth ranked higher than six other installations, including Pearl Harbor. Yet, the Pentagon opted to keep open the Hawaii yard because of its strategic location in the Pacific. The independent BRAC commission has been on a cross-country tour of military facilities and regional hearings since the Pentagon released its base-closure recommendations May 13. The nine commissioners have until Sept. 8 to submit their list of recommendations to the White House.

... As Boisterous Crowds Aim To Influence BRAC Decisions

Congress Daily
Megan Scully
July 7, 2005

BOSTON -- A raucous crowd of more than 3,000 workers from Maine's Portsmouth Naval Shipyard boarded buses Wednesday and braved rain-drenched New England roads to try to save the yard -- and, ultimately, more than 4,500 jobs. Their goal was to show a unified and expansive front during the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's public hearing here. The crowd -- all wearing bright yellow shirts declaring, "PNS Set the Navy Standard" -- gave standing ovations whenever lawmakers discussed Portsmouth's accomplishments. "We don't have to ask you to tell us what you really feel," BRAC Commissioner James Bilbray said after a loud cheer. The Maine contingency was the loudest and largest of the five New England

states that warned the commission of the damage the closings could have on local economies and national security. The large crowds are part of a strategy to persuade the panel to overturn the Pentagon's recommendations.

Shipyard employees, along with congressional staffers from Maine and New Hampshire, combed through thousands of pages of documents to prepare for the hearing, said Paul O'Connor, president of the base's Federal Employees Metal Trades Council. O'Connor said he was pleased, not only with the crowd but also with the testimony. "Everybody had their A-game going," he said. Workers at the shipyard -- mostly from Maine and neighboring New Hampshire -- said they have been mobilized in the last two months by a community Web site and e-mails. "This is not about saving jobs," said John Curtis, an engineer at the shipyard for more than five years. "It's about saving taxpayers' money." Another engineer and a 20-year Navy veteran, Riley Greenwood, said the Portsmouth yard performs critical repair work. "Sailors like the boats at Portsmouth," he said. Another two buses left from the New Hampshire Statehouse Wednesday morning, filled with lawmakers and staff. "We have a good geographic spread of lawmakers here," said Democratic state Rep. Janet Wall. "People took off time from work today [to] bring security for our future." Earlier in the day, the commission heard from a smaller band of workers -- wearing T-shirts imploring the independent BRAC commission to "save our ships" and about 8,500 jobs -- from New London Submarine Base in Connecticut, the largest installation slated for closure. "People from all over the region are pulling together for a common purpose," said Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., whose district includes the New London base.

Connecticut and Maine officials also weaved in testimony from retired Vice Adm. Al Konetzni, who is opposed to both closure recommendations. Connecticut included testimony from George Sawyer, assistant secretary of the Navy for shipbuilding during the Reagan administration. The sub base is the "core, the heart, the vital center" of Navy underwater warfare in New England, Sawyer

said. The Maine and New Hampshire delegation had expected to have another retired Navy officer, Rear Adm. William Klemm, to make their case. But he was pulled at the last minute because he retired less than a year ago and his testimony would have violated Navy policy, officials said. His testimony would have been "devastating" to the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations, said Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H.

Local News Articles

Base Advocates Cite London

The Washington Times (Washington DC)
Christina Bellantoni and Keyonna Summers
July 8, 2005

Local officials, in two hearings yesterday, evoked the terrorist bombings in London to bolster their arguments that closing military installations in the District and Virginia would threaten regional homeland security.

D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams, testifying before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission on Capitol Hill, said the Pentagon's proposal to close Walter Reed Army Medical Center and realign Bolling Air Force Base would hurt the city's response to a terrorist attack.

Mrs. Norton, a Democrat and the District's nonvoting congressional representative, said the September 11 attacks made Walter Reed even more valuable.

"The Defense Department also failed to address the critical homeland security function of Walter Reed should our nation's capital be hit by a terrorist attack or other major disaster, creating mass casualties," she said. "It's not base closing in the traditional sense of the word -- this is a hospital."

Mr. Williams, a Democrat, said in light of the attacks in London and the potential threat to the Washington region, closing Walter Reed or realigning Bolling "sends a terrible signal that our very own Department of Defense is fleeing our nation's capital."

Paul Strauss, the District's shadow senator, said the federal closure commission would be "wrong to ignore the realities the sudden current events have brought."

Closing the only military hospital in the District "struck me yesterday as ill-advised. ... Today it borders on criminally negligent," said Mr. Strauss, a Democrat.

Walter Reed in Northwest is one of dozens of U.S. military bases the Pentagon has recommended for either closure or realignment. Hundreds of soldiers have been treated at Walter Reed for injuries they received during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If Walter Reed closes, a new hospital would be built at Fort Belvoir and some of the Walter Reed staff and services would be transferred to an expanded health care facility at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. The facility would operate under the Walter Reed name.

In Virginia, the Pentagon's recommendations include relocating nearly 23,000 jobs in Northern Virginia currently in leased office buildings that the military says do not meet federal security standards. The jobs would be moved to bases such as Fort Belvoir that are located outside the Capital Beltway.

At a public hearing in Arlington late yesterday, U.S. Sen. John W. Warner, Virginia Republican, warned the closure commission of the harm such closures can pose in a state of emergency.

He said Americans must remember "how fragile life is however and whenever the terrorists choose to attack. We are a nation at war. We can't afford to take any missteps."

Mr. Warner also said the shuffle was more about ending leasing arrangements than military considerations. He said the proposal ignored the intentions of Congress when it crafted rules to streamline its military infrastructure.

"I know that law and I know what Congress intended," said Mr. Warner, who serves as

chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Margaret Brandis, an Arlington resident who works for a defense contractor in Rosslyn, was one of many concerned workers who showed up at that hearing.

"I foresee a major traffic nightmare if everyone in Arlington has to be reassigned to Belvoir," said Mrs. Brandis, 53.

BRAC is scheduled to make its final recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

**Pa. Leaders Fight On For Willow Grove
Senators and the governor told the closure
panel of its worth, and the attacks in London
were cited.**

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)
Chris Mondics
July 8, 2005

WASHINGTON - Pennsylvania's political leaders argued passionately yesterday before a commission reviewing proposed military base closings that shutting Willow Grove air base would harm the nation's defenses against terrorism and inflict a severe economic blow on the Philadelphia region.

Republican Sens. Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum and Democratic Gov. Rendell, who led the testimony before the Defense Department's Base Realignment and Closure Commission, said closing Willow Grove would eliminate thousands of jobs and undermine the Pentagon's goal of more cooperation among military branches.

Advocates of the base repeatedly cited yesterday's bombings in London as evidence that Willow Grove must be kept open.

"It is a little hard for me to understand, given the nature and quality of these operations, that they would consider shutting them down," Specter

said of the Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve Base at Willow Grove. "We are at war, and we saw evidence of that in London today."

The nine members of the commission, commonly known as BRAC, sat largely silent during the presentations, giving no hint of their reaction. But the audience members, dozens wearing yellow T-shirts inscribed "Save Willow Grove.Com," jumped to their feet and roared their approval when Rep. Curt Weldon (R., Pa.) of Delaware County said the base served a key function in the war in Iraq and the fight against global terrorism.

"You take away Willow Grove and you take away an important asset," Weldon told the panel.

The 62-year-old Willow Grove facility was one of 30 major U.S. military bases on a list of recommended base closings issued in May by the Pentagon.

BRAC chairman Anthony Principi, who presided over the hearing at the Cannon House Office Building, offered encouraging words for Willow Grove proponents during a tour of the base Tuesday. He said then that closing it would seem to contradict the Pentagon's goal of more joint training and operations among the military services. Willow Grove has emphasized that approach since the mid-1990s and is home now to Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force and Air National Guard units.

But Willow Grove is competing against the other bases that also have been slated for closure, many of which also maintain that they are essential to the nation's defense.

Santorum argued that Willow Grove's joint training and operations and its strategic position within easy reach of Philadelphia and New York were strong points in its favor.

"This facility is geographically positioned to support the rapid deployment of military personnel all along the Eastern Seaboard," he said.

The BRAC commission has until Sept. 8 to forward its own list of closings, working off the Pentagon's recommendations, to President Bush. Tuesday's tour and yesterday's presentation gave base advocates two prominent occasions to make their case.

Rendell said he expected that he and other political leaders would be in touch regularly with BRAC commissioners and staff to build upon that case.

Central to it, Rendell said, is the federal requirement that the Pentagon clear any decision to deactivate a reserve unit with the governor of the state in which that unit is based. He said the Pentagon did not do that in the case of the Air Guard's 111th Fighter Wing at Willow Grove, which is composed of A-10 jets designed to attack tanks.

"I did not consent then," he said. "I do not consent now."

Rep. Allyson Y. Schwartz (D., Pa.), whose Montgomery County district includes the base, said that 75 percent of the 111th personnel had been deployed to combat zones and that it had 132 combat-ready pilots.

Ed Ebenbach, a local Chamber of Commerce member helping lead efforts to save the base, said that beyond the more than 1,200 people employed at Willow Grove, thousands of others would lose their jobs as a consequence of its closure.

Rep. Michael G. Fitzpatrick (R., Pa.) sought to tie Willow Grove's fate to the evolving military strategy against terrorism.

"The Cold War is over, and the threats against our nation have changed," he said. "We need to focus on... training our military to work together as well as to focus on the needs of domestic security. Willow Grove is a base that will enhance both of these."

State Argues Against Closing Air Wing

Top officials tell base-closing panel Pentagon is wrong

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pittsburgh, PA)
Maeve Reston
July 8, 2005

WASHINGTON -- Several hundred yellow-shirted Pennsylvanians converged in Washington yesterday to show support as state officials told an independent commission that the Pentagon was dead wrong this spring when it recommended closing the Pittsburgh-area 911th Airlift Wing, an Air Reserve unit in Moon, and the Willow Grove Naval Air Station, which is north of Philadelphia.

A bipartisan group of state and congressional officials made the case to members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, that the two bases are a critical part of the nation's homeland security operations.

The Pennsylvania hearing was just one of a number of regional hearings this week in which BRAC members are weighing the Defense Department's May recommendations to close or realign 62 of 318 major U.S. bases and to scale back or close 775 smaller bases.

BRAC must make final recommendations to President Bush regarding the proposed changes by Sept. 8. He then has until Sept. 23 to accept or reject them in their entirety. If he approves, Congress has 45 legislative days to veto the package or else they become binding.

Thirteen bases in Pennsylvania are on the closure list, and the Pentagon has requested realignment of six others -- for a potential loss of some 1,800 jobs in the state. But Pennsylvania's senators and congressmen, along with Gov. Ed Rendell, yesterday focused on the 911th and Willow Grove -- the two sites where the economic impact would be greatest and they believe that their case is strongest.

The officials highlighted the opportunities for the 911th base to expand on an adjacent 53 acres and double its capacity of C-130 aircraft stationed there. They also emphasized the

capability of Pittsburgh's medical community to respond to terrorism-related incidents.

Officials including Rep. Tim Murphy, R-Upper St. Clair, also made the case that Pittsburgh-area Army Reserve units at bases slated for closure or realignment could be consolidated in Pittsburgh, which they argued is an important recruiting area.

The Pennsylvanians also argued that Willow Grove is strategically located between New York and Washington, and that Navy, Marine, Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve and Pennsylvania Air National Guard units already work jointly there -- an aspect that few other U.S. bases share and a model of the cooperation that the Pentagon has said will be key to modernization of the U.S. military.

For some state officials, the terrorist attacks in London yesterday served as a reminder of the broad and rapid response necessary if another attack occurred in the United States, and they linked yesterday's terrorism with what they view as the strengths of the Pennsylvania bases.

"It's a little hard for me to understand, given the nature and quality of these operations [at Willow Grove and the 911th], how we could be even considering closing them down when we're at war," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa. "We saw ... what happened in London in the past few hours."

Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., who made the delegation's opening statement promoting the 911th and Willow Grove, along with Rendell and Specter, said closing these northeastern U.S. sites would be a huge mistake because it undercuts the nation's ability to respond to attacks. "We are losing the presence of the military in a very strategic and important place in our country, and we cannot afford to do that," he said.

All the Pennsylvania officials emphasized that the short, but potentially safe, distance of both Willow Grove and Pittsburgh from Washington and New York could be helpful in responding to a bio-terrorism attack, for example.

In a bid to show the bases' importance to their community, about 70 people wearing black-and-gold T-shirts with the message "Pittsburgh Land & More" traveled to Washington by bus yesterday. Among them was Arlene Petrosky of Robinson, a member of the Honorary Commanders Association, which is a group set up by the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce and the military to foster communication between the air wing and local business community.

Petrosky later said the Pittsburgh-area participants returned home last evening with a sense of optimism. She said she and others who had attended the BRAC session thought state officials had done a good job rebutting the Defense Department's initial assertions.

"There was so much information that was either incorrect or lacking that we were able to present today to try to make the case for our bases," she said. "It's going to affect our economy; it's affecting our recruitment. ... Pittsburgh has so much to offer as far as expansion and being able to handle things for homeland security."

Foes of the Willow Grove closure, which would cost more than 1,200 jobs, also were at yesterday's hearing. One protester said they had filled five chartered buses.

Ralph Galow, an 80-year-old Navy veteran wearing one of the light yellow T-shirts urging commissioners to "Save Willow Grove," said supporters planned to keep pressure on BRAC as well as their state representatives. Galow, who lives in Willow Grove, said he thought the bases' fate could be particularly important to Santorum as he faces a tough re-election fight next year against likely opponent state Treasurer Robert P. Casey Jr.

Keith Dorman, spokesman for the Military Affairs Council of Western Pennsylvania, said he was pleased with the state's presentation yesterday, though he had hoped that the BRAC members would ask more questions, sometimes an indicator of their inclination. "But I think [commissioners] were engaged in the process,

they were alert and focused," he said. "And I think we did what we had to do."

In yesterday's closing argument, Specter said Pennsylvania had suffered enough in prior military-closure rounds -- which occurred in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995. In those earlier instances, the state lost 3,000 military jobs and more than 13,000 civilian jobs, Santorum said.

Specter reminded BRAC members of his fight against the Defense Department's decision in the early 1990s to shut the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. He filed suit then against the Navy in federal court, arguing that the service had not used proper criteria in concluding that the shipyard should be closed, and that it had concealed information from Congress, thus mandating further review.

After winning appeals court approval, Specter personally argued his case before the U.S. Supreme Court in March 1994. But since base closures must be acted upon in their entirety, winning would have stalled some 300 other closures in that BRAC round. The Supreme Court unanimously rejected Specter's plea.

In this round, he has said state officials are once again making no concessions. "Pennsylvania has been very hard hit," Specter said. "I think we've done more than our fair share."

State Leaders Object To Plan Moving Military Planes, Jobs Middle River airport losses to be topic at hearing

Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, MD)
Jonathan D. Rockoff
July 8, 2005

Maryland leaders largely support the Pentagon's military base relocation plan that would bring thousands of jobs to the Baltimore area, but they intend to sound off today about the part of the proposal that would move planes and take jobs from the Air National Guard base at Martin State Airport in Middle River.

The leaders will give their views during a regional hearing in Towson of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which recommended the changes.

Lawmakers and other state officials said in interviews that they planned to praise the overall proposal, which is expected to bring 6,600 jobs to Aberdeen Proving Ground and Fort Meade, along with an estimated \$3 billion in additional federal spending.

"On the whole, we're very happy," said Aris Melissaratos, secretary of the state Department of Business and Economic Development. "We're a net gainer, with higher-paying science jobs."

But after the Pentagon announced the base relocation plan in May, state and Baltimore County officials have been lobbying the Defense Department to reverse its proposal to move eight C-130J cargo aircraft and more than 100 jobs to Air National Guard bases in California and Rhode Island.

Maj. Gen. Bruce F. Tuxill, adjutant general of the Maryland National Guard, said he has argued that the move would diminish the force's ability to provide security in the important New York-Washington, D.C. corridor, and to react to natural disasters and other emergencies in the area.

Tuxill has also said that as many as 400 reservists who have helped in Iraq and Afghanistan would leave the service without planes to fly and work to do in the area.

"It has a national consequence, and I don't think that's fully understood," Tuxill said.

Maryland's congressional delegation, while lauding the overall plan, has gently criticized the proposal to move the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in Bethesda to Fort Belvoir in Virginia. And it has expressed concern about the impact on the Maryland Air National Guard.

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski said in a statement yesterday that she "opposed" the

recommendation to move the eight cargo planes from Martin State Airport and that she planned to ask military officials at the hearing today to drop the idea of moving the eight cargo planes from the Warfield Air National Guard Base at Martin State Airport.

The base realignment commission, which held a similar meeting in Washington yesterday, is holding hearings around the country to gather feedback.

It is scheduled to convene at 8:30 a.m. in Goucher College's Kraushaar Auditorium to hear how the plan affects Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey.

Maryland's two U.S. senators, Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger and Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. are among the scheduled speakers. They have an hour to talk. Members of the public can attend but will not be able to speak.

The speakers intend to praise the overall proposal and say the state has the schools, roads and skills to handle the new deployments.

New Jersey and Delaware officials are expected to be critical. About 200 employees and citizens from Fort Monmouth in New Jersey are taking buses to the hearing. That base would lose 2,000 science and engineering jobs to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Military officials expect hundreds of base personnel and residents from Delaware to come as well.

Va. Officials Point Out Cost Of Closing Fort Monroe

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)
Dale Eisman
July 8, 2005

ARLINGTON — Closure of Hampton's Fort Monroe will invite years of expensive lawsuits and require an environmental cleanup that could cost taxpayers up to \$1 billion, far more than would be saved by eliminating the historic base, state and local officials asserted on Thursday.

The planned shut-down of the moat-enclosed Army post could turn into "the most convoluted, complicated, costly and controversial" military base closing in history, U.S. Sen. George F. Allen warned members of an independent base closing commission.

"Any potential savings will be so far in the future that you can't quantify it," Allen said.

Allen, Gov. Mark R. Warner and U.S. Sen. John W. Warner led a delegation of local officials on Thursday in urging the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission to spare Fort Monroe and block Pentagon plans to move several Army commands out of nearby Fort Eustis in Newport News.

In a two-hour hearing that was their last public chance to influence the powerful commission, the group also sought – without much apparent success – to flesh out details of the panel's reported concerns about the future of Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach.

The commission sent the Pentagon a written query about Oceana last week, suggesting that it might make sense to move the Navy fighter planes based there to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. Houses and commercial development have crept to the edge of the Oceana property over the last 20 years, raising concerns about safety in the area and leading to complaints from some residents about jet noise.

Gov. Warner argued Thursday that those concerns have been exaggerated, citing opinion polls that indicate that 86 percent of local residents want the base to remain open. He also disclosed that state officials have identified sites in Virginia that could accommodate an auxiliary landing field, where Oceana-based jets would practice take offs and landings.

Much of that practice is now done at Fentress Field, an airstrip in Chesapeake. The Navy wants to build a replacement for Fentress in Washington and Beaufort counties in North Carolina, but the effort has been delayed by a lawsuit filed on behalf of nearby residents.

Warner said Virginia officials hope that the North Carolina site is approved but have let the Navy know it may have options in Virginia if it needs them.

Warner also said state officials can present other evidence of Oceana's value to the Navy and importance to the area, but none of the four commissioners at the meeting responded to his invitation.

"I'm hoping that means they took our arguments," Warner said later.

Commission chairman Anthony J. Principi said after the session that the panel had heard from several "senior naval officers" concerned about development around the base and constraints on the Navy's ability to make full, round-the-clock use of Oceana's runways.

Those concerns led to last week's questions to the Pentagon, Principi acknowledged. But he said the commission has made no decision about whether to add Oceana to the list of bases being considered for closure.

Seven of the nine commissioners would have to vote to put Oceana on the list. And after that, the panel would have another hearing devoted to Oceana before making a final decision to recommend closure.

The panel has set a July 19 hearing for votes on whether to add any bases to the

33 recommended for closure by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. The group's final recommendations are due by Sept. 8.

Under the law, Congress and President Bush must accept or reject the commission's plan as a package; lawmakers cannot add or remove individual bases.

Much of Thursday's hearing was devoted to an attack by Northern Virginia representatives on Pentagon plans to shift almost 23,000 uniformed and civilian workers from leased offices in the Washington area to more secure military facilities.

The transfers could prompt an exodus of thousands of those workers to other employers, officials warned, robbing the military of the talents of some of the nation's foremost scientists and engineers.

And making the transfers through the base closing process is illegal, Sen. Warner added. Congress crafted the base closing law to apply only to government-owned facilities, he said.

The panel's tight schedule gave officials only about 30 minutes to make their case for Fort Monroe and Fort Eustis.

Hampton Mayor Ross Kearney argued that the recent discovery of burial sites for slaves and American Indians at the fort – along with the presence of a historic Catholic church, St. Mary's Star of the Sea – could lead to expensive and time-consuming lawsuits if federal authorities try to return the property to the state, its original owner.

Authorities could encounter similar headaches in attempts to clean out unexploded bombs and other ammunition that is thought to be buried under some of the base's historic homes, Kearney said.

Sub Base Supporters Are Optimistic

The Westerly Sun (Westerly, RI)
Tom Kasprzak
July 7, 2005

GROTON - Connecticut officials and supporters of the Groton Sub Base said they feel optimistic about the base remaining operational after facts and information were presented to the Base Realignment and Closure Committee in Boston on Wednesday.

"I was very encouraged," said Bud Fay of Groton, a member of the Sub Base Realignment Coalition.

About 250 supporters of the Groton Sub Base traveled on buses and in cars to listen to appeals presented by Connecticut State officials, who

were arguing against the BRAC's decision to close the base.

Fay said that, after Connecticut officials presented their arguments for why the base should remain open, many of the BRAC commissioners asked questions. He said they seemed eager to know why they had never previously learned of the information regarding the base, that was presented by Connecticut officials.

"If I had to guess I would say we did an absolutely fantastic job of giving them facts that made sense," Fay said. "It obviously impressed the (BRAC) commission."

Congressman Rob Simmons, R-Stonington, added that area officials, including those from Rhode Island, presented a strong case as to why the base should stay active. Simmons also said that officials stressed that the protocol used to assess the Groton Sub Base was unfair.

"I think we demonstrated that the BRAC commission used a process that didn't seem fair and didn't seem equitable," Simmons said.

Simmons added that the Groton Sub Base is not only recognized by America as the fifth highest military installation, but is recognized around the world as one of the leaders in the technology and execution of underwater military action.

Simmons said with over 100 years of history, the Groton Sub Base is not an installation that can simply be picked up and moved.

Fay agrees, questioning why the United States would shut down the number one area for underwater tactics.

"It just doesn't make sense," he said.

Fay noted that above the environmental cleanup and the base's economic impact on the community, Connecticut officials made it clear that the first and foremost reason the base should remain operational is because of its military value.

"You either make your case with military value or you don't have a case," Fay explained.

"Everyone on the team stated their case very well."

Although officials and supporters of the sub base felt the hearings were a triumph for sustaining the operation of the base, Simmons said it is a win only for yesterday's battle, but officials must stay focused to win the war.

"It doesn't end today," he said.

Simmons added that the area had a big day in June, when supporters lined the streets on Route 12 as BRAC commissioners visited the base, and the area had a big day on Wednesday, stating their reasons to keep the base active.

Simmons said officials will now work to uncover additional information from the BRAC commission that was kept secret to Connecticut officials. Simmons added the fight will not end until the final decision in September.

Baldacci: DoD plans would trigger a 'government-induced recession'

Brunswick Times Record (Brunswick, ME)
Christopher Cousins
July 7, 2005

BOSTON — The Pentagon's plan to close two Maine military facilities and downsize Brunswick Naval Air Station would trigger a catastrophic government-induced recession in Maine and New Hampshire, Gov. John Baldacci told a presidentially appointed commission in Boston on Wednesday.

The closures and realignment proposed under the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process would affect Maine as much or more than any state in the nation and recovery would take years, he said.

"The closure of any single installation would be painful; the closure of three together will be felt throughout the Maine economy for years to

come," said Baldacci during his testimony. "It will be nothing short of a catastrophe."

Baldacci's comments came at the end of a long day of testimony by officials from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. The day was full of emotional ups and downs, from impassioned remarks about the impacts closures would have on workers and communities to tedious reviews of data about the minutiae of running military installations.

During the hearings on behalf of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, thousands of people — most of them with matching yellow shirts — filed into the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, forcing organizers to add more seating in the gigantic, arched-roof conference hall. All the presentations from states where base closures or realignments will have a negative effect attacked the Pentagon's reasoning in developing its realignment and closure list, specifically outlining how a set of eight criteria was not followed, as required by Congress.

Defending BNAS

Following New Hampshire's defense of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Maine's presentation came last — first addressing Brunswick Naval Air Station, then Limestone. The case for Brunswick was made by Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, both R-Maine, Rep. Tom Allen, D-Maine, Gov. John Baldacci and retired Navy Adm. Harry Rich, a member of the local task force that was formed to advocate for BNAS during the base realignment and closure process.

"Substantial deviations" was the phrase of the day as Maine's delegation tried to illustrate the gap between the Pentagon's proposed BRAC list and the criteria that were supposed to be used in developing that list.

For Brunswick, the presenters focused on what was characterized as flawed data that was used by the Pentagon in calculating savings to the Navy if all of the aircraft and 85 percent of the active-duty military personnel at BNAS are moved to Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla.

The presentations, which were given under oath, were somber in nature and focused on data — in some ways a departure from the caustic attacks the congressional delegation has levied at the Pentagon in less formal settings.

In essence, the presenters said that the Pentagon's number-crunching either misrepresented or ignored reality in everything from construction that would be needed at Jacksonville to how much it would cost for the Navy's P-3 Orion aircraft to patrol the Northeast while based in Florida.

But the most important argument for BNAS is its strategic military value, which is heavily weighted among the eight BRAC criteria.

"A strategy to protect our extensive coastal borders is key to homeland defense, and, as you know, that strategy is just evolving," said retired Adm. Harry Rich. "A fully capable, operational air station strategically located in the Northeast with permanently assigned long-range maritime patrol aircraft is absolutely critical to success."

Rich, whose long Navy career put him in a position to deliver many important speeches, said after the presentation that nothing he's ever done was as important as what he did Wednesday.

"It was more pressure than anything I've ever done before," he said. "Nobody's livelihood ever depended on my success."

Collins also spoke about Brunswick Naval Air Station's military value.

"This location (in the Northeast) makes Brunswick a vital link in our national defense posture and critical for surveillance of ships coming from Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East," she said. "Its proximity to major population centers, combined with its ability to support every aircraft in the Department of Defense's inventory, makes BNAS essential across the full range of homeland defense operations and contingencies. By any fair and

complete assessment, Brunswick Naval Air Station more than measures up."

Snowe focused on the Pentagon's estimates of cost savings, unraveling them one by one with claims that they were based on faulty or missing data. Her points ranged from the fact that Jacksonville would have to spend millions to accommodate the additional aircraft and personnel from BNAS to the increased cost for the P-3 Orion to fly from Jacksonville to points north. It costs about \$8,000 per flight hour to fly a P-3, which would add \$55,000 to the cost of a flight to the Navy base in Sigonella, Italy, for example.

Snowe concluded that the Pentagon's estimate of 20-year savings of \$238.8 million is more than four times higher than her estimate of \$56.5 million.

"It is clear that the Navy's sole reason for recommending the realignment of BNAS — cost savings — is not supportable by the facts," she said.

BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi said after the hearings that the presentations were comprehensive and compelling, but he didn't hint about what the commission's action might be.

"It is clear to all of us that Maine is hit particularly hard by these recommendations," he told reporters during a brief press conference. "What we saw today makes the commission's job more difficult. No decisions have been made."

The commission has until Sept. 8 to forward a revised list of closure and realignment recommendations to President Bush.

Hawaii leaders emphasize importance of Pearl Harbor shipyard

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Pearl Harbor, HI)
Jaymes Song
July 7, 2005

Sen. Daniel Inouye has launched a campaign to keep Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard from being added to a list of proposed base closures including lobbying top military officials such as Navy Secretary Gordon England.

"I discussed this matter with the secretary himself and I can assure you he is part of our team," Inouye said Thursday. "He knows and realizes Pearl Harbor is an important part of Pacific Command. You take that away, and you really injure the Navy, you set back the nation."

Inouye, D-Hawaii, on Thursday met with Adm. Walter F. Doran, commander of the Pacific Fleet, and Capt. Frank Camelio, head of the Pearl Harbor shipyard, to discuss the possibility of the Base Realignment and Closure commission adding the shipyard to the list of proposed base closures.

The Pentagon put the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on its May 13 list of recommended closures, but last week the commission asked Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld for an explanation of why the Pearl Harbor shipyard wasn't on the list.

On a brief visit to Honolulu, Inouye also addressed thousands of nervous shipyard workers, whose jobs could be in jeopardy. He assured them he was doing the "utmost to make certain their message is conveyed to the commission."

The base closure commission will conduct a public hearing on July 19 in Washington to decide whether several bases left off the list, including the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, should be added. It would take the votes of seven of the nine commissioners to add a base, and public hearings and base visits would follow.

Maine and New Hampshire officials on Wednesday made their case to the commission during a hearing in Boston, saying it would be a mistake to close Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, because the nation's oldest shipyard is a model of efficiency. They said that

closing Pearl Harbor would save the Navy far more money.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said the Pentagon's computer model indicated that closing the Pearl Harbor shipyard could save \$760 million more than shuttering Portsmouth over 20 years. The savings would have been even greater if the Navy had taken into account Portsmouth's greater efficiency versus other submarine depots like Pearl Harbor, she said.

Inouye said comparing the efficiency of the two shipyards is like "comparing apples and oranges," because Pearl is the only "all-service" facility that does everything from emergency repairs to major work that takes a year.

"This is the only shipyard that does that and their overall record is the finest in the land," he said.

Brig. Gen. Robert Lee, Hawaii's adjutant general and head of state civil defense, said the Navy wanted to keep Hawaii shipyard, but it was "the arguments from the folks in the Northeast" that caused the base closure commission to consider Pearl Harbor as well.

"The Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard is a critical industrial complex not only for the state, but for our nation because it really supports the national military strategy," he said.

Lee said Hawaii doesn't need to spend "needless resources" to respond to the commission's possible issues with the shipyard, which employs nearly more than 4,000 civilians and is Hawaii's largest industrial employer.

"Portsmouth is on the other end of the spectrum. They have to defend what they have. That's their last stand," he said.

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard was a late entry in the bases considered for closing. That surprised many in the islands and has spurred a late effort by Hawaii officials to defend the shipyard and the importance of the accompanying sprawling naval base.

The United States in the past few years has been beefing up forces in Hawaii, a key military location for the Asia-Pacific region and more than 30 vessels are home-ported at Pearl Harbor. The Navy is also considering basing an aircraft carrier at Pearl Harbor.

So taking away the shipyard and forcing the ships and submarines to travel thousands of miles to the mainland would not make sense, Inouye said. "You're going to have a big fleet out here and what are you going to do, send them out to Portsmouth?"

But Inouye, the third most senior member of the Senate, advised shipyard workers to take the current situation "seriously" because he knows Washington.

"Unfortunately, the government doesn't always work on logic," he said.

Opinions/ Editorials

Base Closings Essential Despite Local Pain, Moves Aid Wider Strategy

Defense News
Barry Blechman
June 27, 2005

By Barry Blechman, chairman of the Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, and chief executive of DFI International, industry and government consultants.

Media coverage of the U.S. Defense Department's base closing recommendations has featured the anguished cries of politicians whose states and districts would lose jobs under the proposed realignments. While understandable, such local protests obscure the fact that the national interest and welfare of the armed forces would be well served by the changes.

The department's proposals would accomplish three goals essential to the effectiveness of the armed forces: saving money, integrating active and reserve forces, and helping services work better together.

The first goal, and the most consequential for U.S. taxpayers, is curbing the growth in military operating costs. Over the past few years, the costs of operations and maintenance and personnel have grown at unprecedented rates. In the wake of 9/11, the country was prepared to let deficits soar, allowing the Defense Department to pay these bills while modernizing weapons and developing transformational technologies. Now that pressure is rising to reduce deficits, the defense budget top line will level off. Continuing growth in operational costs will crowd out funds needed for capital investments. The Government Accountability Office estimates that past base realignment and closure (BRAC) rounds have saved \$29 billion so far, an amount increasing by about \$7 billion every year. But the department desperately needs more.

The armed forces are roughly two-thirds of their Cold War size. Bases should be adjusted accordingly — closing ancient Army depots, consolidating Army training facilities, and centralizing certain Navy research and development centers are cases in point. Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, once an important Cold War bastion, should be shuttered and its small force of B-1 bombers sent to join the ones at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas.

The second, and most politically charged, goal is the proposed transfer of Reserve and National Guard facilities to active service bases. Cuts in Reserve component facilities account for some two-thirds of the proposed closures. Opponents say the reductions in local reserve centers will make it more difficult to recruit and retain troops. This is a serious issue, given current personnel concerns, and the BRAC commission is certain to take a hard look at some of these suggested consolidations.

But the proposed changes recognize a vitally important strategic change in the way the United States fights wars in the 21st century. Already evident during the Balkan interventions in the 1990s, the recent engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate clearly the nation's

dependence on Reserve units operating in a fully integrated manner with active-duty forces.

Bringing scattered units into larger installations that combine active and reserve troops will improve their ability to work together. For example, the consolidation of the Air Force's C-130 reserve assets in Reno, Nev.; Schenectady, N.Y.; Channel Islands, Calif.; and Dyess into an integrated airlift wing at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., will make these units more ready to deploy quickly for emergencies.

Third, the goal of integrating service operations, or jointness, the most consistent theme of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's tenure, played a central role in the Pentagon's recommendations. Modern wars rely on effective joint military actions, and this needs to be reflected not only on the battlefield but in how the services prepare for wars.

The proposals to create joint training facilities and medical centers are modest steps. They include the conversion of Eglin Air Force Base in Florida into a joint training site for Joint Strike Fighter pilots and the merger of some of the Army's medical facilities at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington with the Navy's medical center in nearby Bethesda, Md.

But these could mark the beginning of a longer-term process aimed at reducing duplication in shared support functions. While many think the department should have gone farther, the Pentagon's recommendations are a significant break with the past, setting precedents for future joint initiatives.

To some, the Pentagon's recommendations may appear partisan. States that voted for Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry will lose 22,000 jobs, while those that supported President George W. Bush will gain 11,000. But the moves are not politically inspired.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., who defeated the Senate Democrats' leader, Tom Daschle, is threatened with the closure of Ellsworth, and Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, chairman of the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee

and arguably the most powerful senator on defense issues, could lose nearly 5,000 jobs in his state.

Rather, the geographic distribution of proposed closures continues what has been a long-term trend toward concentration of the nation's armed forces in the southern and mountain portions of the country. Given that military families, retirees and contractors tend to cluster near military bases, this geographic concentration leads to wide differences in public opinion on military issues, perhaps helping to explain the electoral outcome, rather than reflecting it.

If there's anything regrettable about the Pentagon's proposed closures, it's that they don't go far enough. This has much to do with the demands of ongoing operations and with the anticipated return of tens of thousands of U.S. forces now deployed in Europe and Asia. Still, one can't shake the feeling that Rumsfeld or the White House decided they had enough problems with the Congress without launching the "Mother of all BRACs," as had been promised.

But overall, the Pentagon's recommendations clearly support the country's defense and fiscal priorities. They are based on sound military judgments, informed by the experience of recent wars and long-term needs to transform military capabilities.

Like all decisions that affect local economic interests, there is bound to be opposition and discontent. Ultimately, however, if the Pentagon's recommendations, or something close to them, are allowed to stand, the winners will be not only the men and women in uniform, but all American taxpayers.

Additional Notes