

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

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Department of Defense Releases**BRAC looks to add more to list**

Army Times
July 11, 2005

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission announced July 1 that it has added more than a dozen facilities to those it could recommend for closing.

The release of the list is a necessary first step for the panel to add any closings to those proposed in May by the Pentagon. In past base-closing rounds, most bases on the “add list” have survived. Several on this list were targets of questions from commissioners during hearings in May.

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.

Among bases the commission wants to review:

- 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 has questioned.
- Army, Navy and Air Force medical commands in the Washington, D.C., area, which the commission will consider merging at one location.
- Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.
- Galena Airport Forward Operating Location, Alaska.
- Several Defense Finance and Accounting Service offices recommended for merging.
- 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 the defense graduate schools in one location.

Principi: Inaccurate financial estimates cloud BRAC process

Army Times
Gordon Trowbridge
July 08, 2005

BALTIMORE — Possible inaccuracies in the Pentagon’s financial estimates for base closings are complicating the work of the independent panel reviewing the plan, its chairman said Friday.

“Indeed it is problematic,” said a frustrated-sounding Anthony Principi following a regional hearing on issues at New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland bases. “It has to be resolved.”

The Government Accountability Office and local officials across the country have questioned Defense Department estimates of the costs and potential savings of a plan that would close 27 large bases and remove jobs from dozens more.

The Pentagon estimates its plan would save nearly \$50 billion over the next 20 years, even after the costs of closing bases and moving troops and units is considered. However, the GAO estimates that nearly half of that figure is reported savings from cutting uniformed personnel — positions the military has said it will not eliminate, but simply shift to other purposes and locations. That will keep the costs of those personnel on the books.

“This is a little like counting as savings my flight that was canceled last week at Newark, but not the cost of the new flight from LaGuardia that I had to take to get home,” Commissioner Phillip Coyle said during Friday’s hearing.

Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., told commissioners that cuts such as the planned elimination of an Air National Guard base in Delaware are an attempt to get around legal requirements that designate Congress as the authority for setting the military’s personnel end strength.

“As my uncle would say, who died and made them boss?” Biden said Friday.

The GAO and local officials have identified other concerns, such as inconsistencies in how the Pentagon estimated construction costs at bases receiving new personnel.

Accurately assessing the wisdom of the Pentagon’s recommendations is difficult without financial estimates that the commission can depend on, Principi said.

The panel’s staff, which includes some economists, is trying to unravel the problem, he said. But the commission has just two months before it must submit its recommendations to President Bush on Sept. 8.

Monmouth supporters buoyed by hearing

Army Times
Gordon Trowbridge
July 08, 2005

BALTIMORE — Supporters of Fort Monmouth, N.J., say they got a glimmer of hope Friday from the independent commission that will rule on Pentagon plans to close the base.

Members of the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission sounded sympathetic to New Jersey officials’ arguments that closing Monmouth — a major technical hub for the Army — would create a “brain drain” of science and technical workers.

And the panel’s chairman, Anthony Principi, reacted positively to the state’s recommendation that Monmouth be combined with the joint Dix-McGuire-Lakehurst megabase that the Pentagon plans for Central New Jersey.

“It’s an issue that we’re going to look at very carefully and that conceptually makes a lot of sense,” Principi said of the idea after four hours of testimony from officials in New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland.

Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., pointed to that and other comments from the commission as evidence that the state could win what officials admit is a longshot battle to keep Monmouth open.

“We need a majority ... of commissioners, and maybe today shows they’re at least moving in that direction,” Pallone said.

Friday’s hearing featured dueling presentations and news conferences by officials from Maryland and New Jersey, fighting over the 5,200 jobs the Pentagon would cut by closing Fort Monmouth. Most would shift to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., where the Army wants to establish a center for command and control, surveillance and communications development and testing.

Monmouth’s backers — and apparently some commissioners — worry that many of the base’s science and technical staff won’t make the move to Aberdeen, costing the military hard-to-find skilled workers. The state hired Harris Interactive, a national polling firm, which found that more than 80 percent of workers don’t plan to move with their jobs. And they said technical workers have been reluctant to leave their homes in previous base-closing rounds.

Commissioner Phillip Coyle, an expert on defense technology who raised the brain-drain concern in questioning Pentagon officials during May hearings, told reporters he found the evidence from past rounds compelling. And retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner said she and fellow commissioners are worried about the loss of skilled support staff as well as researchers.

Maryland officials, not surprisingly, said such worries are overblown.

“Whether it’s 20 percent or 40 percent, it doesn’t matter” how many workers move, said Aris Melissaratos, Maryland’s secretary of economic and business development.

New employees from Maryland would do the job better than those in New Jersey, he said.

Commissioners will hold the last of 19 regional hearings next week in Texas, California and Louisiana. They will meet in Washington, D.C., July 18 and 19 to consider adding bases to the Pentagon's recommendations, and must submit their final list to President Bush by Sept. 8.

National News Articles

BRAC List Is Northeast's Biggest Threat Since British

San Antonio Express-News
Gary Martin
July 10, 2005

KITTERY, Maine — John Joyal is the third generation of his family to work at the historic Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Unless a base closing commission overrules the Pentagon, he'll be the last.

Last week, as he watched his son's baseball practice, he lamented that bureaucrats in Washington are threatening his employment, his heritage and his way of life.

"That's a political poison pill that I'm not swallowing," he says.

"It's not a patriotic thing we are talking about, it's an American thing," Joyal said of the bricked facility that has built and serviced U.S. naval vessels since 1800.

The goateed, blue-collar worker has joined the effort here to save the shipyard, which has been targeted for closure by the Pentagon as part of a broad initiative to eliminate or realign unneeded military facilities and save billions of dollars.

The decision ultimately must be endorsed by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission — commonly called BRAC — which held a public hearing on Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's recommendations last week in Boston.

Texans will have their chance to address the commission Monday, when it holds a regional hearing in San Antonio.

Joyal's first concern is his own paycheck, but he also worries about employment opportunities for youngsters like his son Tyler, a pitcher on the Somersworth, N.H., All-Stars traveling team.

"I wish for him to do bigger and better things," said Joyal, who would prefer that Tyler, 11, go to college some day.

But Joyal said he'll fight for the shipyard, which has provided a comfortable living for New Englanders for more than two centuries.

Joyal's father, an electrician, retired from the shipyard in 1986. His grandfather was a riggers-helper at the yard during World War II.

Three uncles, a sister and several cousins also work at the shipyard.

"I'll do whatever it takes, as long as I'm vertical and breathing, to save Portsmouth Naval Shipyard," Joyal said.

The Pentagon's hit list includes closure or realignment of a cluster of New England facilities: the shipyard at Portsmouth; Brunswick, Maine, Naval Air Station; New London Submarine Base, Conn.; Otis Air National Guard Base at Cape Cod, Mass.; and Newport, R.I., Naval Station.

The historic Portsmouth Naval Prison, built in 1905, was closed in 1974.

The losses would eliminate thousands of jobs in a five-state region, and leave New England without a substantial military presence, virtually for the first time since the beginning of the Republic.

The sub base in Connecticut employs about 8,000 workers, and hundreds are employed at smaller, targeted facilities.

Closing the Portsmouth shipyard would mean the loss of 4,800 jobs, mostly civilian, with a

\$318 million payroll that flows through communities in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, according 2005 figures compiled by the Seacoast Shipyard Association.

Thousands more jobs would be lost indirectly.

"The loss of 12,000 jobs will be nothing less than a federally induced recession — one that our region and our workers would not recover from quickly," said New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch.

It's a staggering hit for New England, still reeling from plant closures over the past decade and the loss of manufacturing jobs throughout the region.

Across the river from the shipyard in Portsmouth, boutiques, pubs and art galleries fill old warehouses and buildings, marking a transformation from the area's industrial past to a tourist-based economy.

But people here note the wage discrepancy between industrial and service sector jobs, and what the loss of the shipyard would mean.

"It's going to be devastating for the area," said Paul Daigle, 49, a pipe-fitter from central New Hampshire, who was out of work for 12 months last year when residential and commercial construction slowed.

"This could be the straw that breaks the camel's back," Daigle said over a Budweiser and a cigarette at the State Street Saloon.

Signs in storefronts express solidarity for the shipyard. Small businessmen say they're girding for the hit that could cripple retail business.

"A lot of relatives work in the yard. We all depend on it," Frank Frisbee, 75, said as he prepared potato salad inside the clapboard Frisbee's Supermarket, "North America's oldest family store," established in 1828.

"It's a part of us," Frisbee said.

The New England facilities are among 33 major U.S. installations targeted for closure as part of a Pentagon plan that would reshape the nation's military capabilities and save more than \$49 billion over 20 years.

Four Texas facilities would be shuttered under the plan: Brooks City-Base in San Antonio, Ingleside Naval Station and the Red River Army Depot and Lone Star Ammunition Plant, both in Texarkana.

Major realignments are planned at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Ellington Field in Houston and Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls.

Although Texas would gain from thousands of Army troops returning from Europe, closures in Ingleside and Texarkana would have a profound impact, said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, who's leading the state's fight to spare local jobs.

San Antonio experienced that pain in 1995, when Kelly AFB and its aircraft repair facility was ordered closed, eliminating 10,000 civilian jobs.

Politicians are acutely aware of the potential damage to local economies caused by closing military facilities that, in many cases, have operated for generations.

At each of the BRAC commission's regional public hearings, concerned citizens have let their feelings be known.

For the Boston hearing, 75 chartered buses brought 4,000 of John Joyal's friends and neighbors, each wearing yellow T-shirts bearing the slogan: "Save Our Shipyard."

Despite the display of support, community leaders are well aware of the odds against removing a base from a closure list.

Since 1988, the first of five organized closure rounds, 85 percent of the Pentagon's proposals have been accepted by the base closure panel.

"Our work is not finished," Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., said after arguing against the proposed closure of the Connecticut sub base. "It's an uphill climb."

Federal lawmakers, wary of the politically painful prospect of losing a base, have blasted the base closure process as flawed.

"The Pentagon has had two years to prepare their recommendations. We had 21 days to respond," Dodd said.

Almost inevitably, frustration over the Pentagon's plan has fueled conspiracy theories.

When retired Rear Adm. William Klemm, a former Navy shipyard expert, declined to testify in Boston on behalf of Portsmouth, civic leaders accused the Navy of "gagging" him.

Like other senior defense officials, Klemm, who retired in April, is under legal constraints that prohibit lobbying immediately after departure from the armed services.

The most pervasive theory here, however, is that the Bush administration is targeting Democrats and their constituencies, such as organized labor, after two bruising election battles.

"Red states, blue states," Rick Bellisle, 52, a shipfitter from Noank, Conn., said with a knowing nod.

Bellisle, who works for a private contractor at the New London sub base, is convinced the Pentagon proposals are the product of a political vendetta.

Similar sentiments are echoed in Maine and New Hampshire.

"It's political. It has to be political," said Joyal, an active Democrat who personally blames President Bush for the predicament at Portsmouth.

The political theory is dismissed by Michael O'Hanlon, a Democrat and an expert on defense strategy at the Brookings Institution who served

under President Clinton at the Defense Department.

"Maine got hit pretty hard with two Republican senators," O'Hanlon said. "And Texas didn't make out like a bandit as one would have thought."

Still, it's not hard to see why the Pentagon's proposals have fueled the rumors. Most of the assets here would move south.

The Navy wants to put the Portsmouth workload in Norfolk, Va.; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and the Puget Sound yard in Washington.

P-3 Orion aircraft from Brunswick Naval Air Station would move to Jacksonville NAS, Fla.

Submarines in Connecticut would be transferred to Norfolk and Kings Bay, Ga., and the warfare command at Naval Station Rhode Island would move to Norfolk.

The Navy estimates that consolidating submarines and repairs on the East and West coasts, and the closure of Portsmouth and New London, would save taxpayers \$2.8 billion after 20 years.

But supporters of the shipyard and the sub base say it would be more efficient to make New London the home for attack submarines now based at Norfolk, and move repair facilities at Pearl Harbor and Virginia to Portsmouth.

Anthony Principi, the base closure chairman, gave New England hope this month when he sent a letter to Rumsfeld asking the Pentagon why Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor was not slated for closure.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, told the commission that closing Pearl Harbor would save \$1.3 billion over 20 years, some "\$760 million more in savings than closing Portsmouth would achieve."

As the public battle continues, however, many in New England are privately preparing for closures that will profoundly change their lives.

In Kittery, local schools might be the first to see the impact if the families of military personnel and skilled workers are forced to relocate.

"Children will have to leave, and we will lose federal money. It's a ripple effect," said Connie Lamprell, 81, a retired teacher from Baltimore who now makes her home near the rocky shores of Kittery Point.

At the town hall, Richard Bolano, 38, a Kittery council member, said citizens remain optimistic because the shipyard survived the base closure process in 1995.

"But this year seems a lot more serious. There is more tension to it," said Bolano, who runs a start-up medical device company.

At the shipyard, union workers are adamant that they would stay in the area, despite a base closure.

"We have a lot of people who won't get up and go away," said Jeffrey Phillips, 49, a machinist and chief union steward.

"I'm a product of the shipyard and I'm proud to tell you that," Joyal said.

A welding instructor, Joyal said he is certain he would not leave if the Navy packs up.

"I'm a civilian," he said. "The Navy is not telling me where to hang my hat or put my boots."

One Shipyard Too Many?

Honolulu Advertiser (Honolulu, HI)
Dennis Camire
July 10, 2005

WASHINGTON — Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard vs. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Hawaii suddenly finds itself in the uncomfortable position of defending the storied Pearl Harbor shipyard before a nine-member commission in charge of reducing the number of U.S. military bases.

And the decision will likely come down to an argument of "military value" versus "strategic value."

Just a few weeks ago, workers at Pearl and many other installations across the country felt relief when the Pentagon did not include their bases on its list of recommended closures and realignments. But that list is only a first hurdle.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, creates the final list of installations to shutter or reconfigure, and will forward it to President Bush and eventually Congress in early September.

The commission surprised Hawai'i by asking the Pentagon for more information about its recommendations, including the decision to close Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, instead of Pearl Harbor.

"People at Pearl might think they dodged a bullet. Well, maybe they didn't," said John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, a defense and security Web site. "People at Portsmouth would think, well, maybe there's hope after all."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld will appear before the commission on July 18 to answer questions about the Pentagon's recommendation. That explanation and the difference between the two shipyards as presented to the commission could ultimately spell the end of one and perhaps the growth of the other.

Hawai'i's business and political leaders have vowed to fight for Pearl.

"Everybody understands the importance to the economy of Pearl Harbor and the people who work there, but the larger issue for the country is the importance as a key component in our defense, and that's how the decision should be made," Gov. Linda Lingle said Friday. "If it's made on that basis, I think we'll be fine."

The state's congressional delegation, which is well-connected to the military, will also try to use its influence. "There is no question to me

that the country needs Pearl Harbor," said U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawai'i, who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The uncertainty affects only the Pearl shipyard. There has been no talk about the closing Pearl Harbor naval base itself.

Historical significance

The two shipyards — Portsmouth founded in 1800 and Pearl in 1908 — have deep roots and historic significance.

Part of Portsmouth's mission statement reads, "To Keep America's Navy #1 in the World," and it claims the titles "Cradle of American Shipbuilding" and oldest naval shipyard continuously operated by the U.S. government.

At Pearl, the stated mission is to keep the Navy "Fit to Fight." With roots that date to the 1800s, long before its official founding, the shipyard on its Web site boasts of having "seen the world's navies transition from sail to steam to nuclear power." Shipyard workers helped rebuild the Pacific fleet after the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The decision to close Portsmouth was made after the Navy — in looking ahead at its forces to 2025 — decided it could close one of its two smaller shipyards with the expected decommissioning of an aircraft carrier and planned reductions in attack submarines.

The workload then would be spread among the remaining three — Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Washington and the Pearl Harbor shipyard.

The bottom line

But the commission, in seeking more information, noted that the Pentagon's analysis showed Pearl Harbor having a lower military value compared to Portsmouth or the other two shipyards.

Military analysts, supporters and the Navy say the bottom line for keeping the Pearl Harbor

shipyard open is its location in the central Pacific and the need for a forward repair facility since the Navy is building up its presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

With an annual payroll of \$385 million, Pearl has 4,297 civilian and 778 military personnel capable of doing work on all but Reagan-class Navy ships. With an annual payroll of \$283 million, Portsmouth has 4,300 civilian and 104 military personnel who work on three classes of submarines.

Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Va., said that while Hawai'i is a high-cost location for doing military support, it is much closer to the area of concern than Portsmouth or any other Navy shipyard.

"The whole point of the base-closure process is to organize the military for future challenges," Thompson said. "The reality is that Pearl Harbor is becoming the most valuable public-sector shipyard we own because of its location."

But Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said efficient work at the Portsmouth shipyard enabled the delivery of submarines back to the fleet a total of 60 weeks early over the past five years.

"One month of transit time certainly, I think, is well compensated by the fact that they save so many months in efficiency (that it is) immaterial where that shipyard is located," she said.

'Military value' score

The big issue raised by the commission is the "military value" score in the Pentagon's analysis.

Portsmouth scored marginally higher than Pearl Harbor in the analysis, which looked at the capacity of the two shipyards to handle the normal workload and their ability to do more in the future in 35 categories — from air conditioning to nuclear engineering and planning. (Norfolk and Puget Sound scored substantially higher than either Portsmouth or Pearl Harbor.)

Despite the score, the Navy chose to close Portsmouth because it was the only shutdown that would both eliminate excess capacity and satisfy the strategic objective to have ship maintenance capabilities close to the fleet, according to a recent report by the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress.

"This, quite honestly, is a smoking gun reflecting the failure of the Navy to meet its own (base closing selection) criteria when it put the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on the list," said Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., when defending Portsmouth last week at a commission hearing.

But Jeremiah J. Gertler, a military analyst who worked for BRAC during the 1995 round of base closings, said the military analysis itself may be flawed for not including a strategic value for Pearl Harbor's location.

"The department has stated wide open that they have a focus on the Pacific and it may have been that was in everybody's mind when they chose Portsmouth over Pearl for closure but they never put it into the numbers," he said. "There has to be objective numbers to back it all up. The commission is a bunch of auditors."

The GAO report also found indications that within the next three years, there would not be much, if any, room for unanticipated ship repairs at the remaining three shipyards if Portsmouth was closed. Navy officials said any unanticipated repairs would be handled by delaying scheduled work and overtime, which they noted is not any different than what is done now, the report said.

Advocates for Portsmouth also argued that the Pentagon's estimated saving of \$1.26 billion over 20 years from closing the shipyard did not include a number of one-time costs that would lower the amount.

"While it is questionable whether all of these costs should be included, our analysis shows that if all are included, the projected 20-year savings

would decrease by \$192 million, or 15 percent," said the GAO report.

Costs and savings

Portsmouth supporters also are concerned that the Pentagon's cost-and-savings analysis did not take into account the shipyard's recognized efficiencies, which could translate into additional costs for the Navy if the shipyard is closed. They estimated that shipyard saves \$82 million over the other Navy shipyards for each submarine refueling and \$26 million for each depot modernization.

But the Navy said that the scope of the work is not always the same, depending on the condition of each submarine, and that wages, especially at Pearl Harbor, are higher than in Portsmouth, according to the GAO report. However, the Navy said they were reviewing the efficiency analysis prepared by the shipyard.

Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawai'i, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, challenged the idea of comparing the two shipyards altogether.

"How on earth can you be comparing ... a ship-repair facility in the Northeast in the U.S. in the Atlantic Ocean and a facility out in the middle of the Pacific 2,500 miles from the mainland of the United States? Why would you compare the two — one of which has dozens of ships including nuclear submarines home-ported there, against a shipyard and port that has no ships home-ported?" he said.

"They both have their rationale. You don't compare them any more than you compare 7-foot basketball players with soccer players."

Federal crunchers question numbers

Texarkana Gazette
Aaron Brand
July 10, 2005

The U.S. Government Accountability Office questions the projected savings the Defense Department foresees by going through with its

recommendations for base closure and realignment, according to a recent report.

Acknowledging this round of Base Realignment and Closure would create \$50 billion in net present value savings over 20 years, the GAO states the money saved would be offset by about \$24 billion in up-front costs to implement the recommendations.

The GAO also argues that much of the projected savings comes from cutting military personnel but it's unclear if those funds can actually be used for military transformation, one of the aims of the BRAC process.

"Much of these savings are related to elimination of jobs currently held by military personnel but are not likely to result in end-strength reductions, limiting savings available for other purposes," states the GAO.

The GAO's analysis also concludes that some assumptions behind the savings are as yet unsubstantiated.

"There are limitations associated with the savings claimed from military personnel reductions and we believe there is uncertainty regarding the magnitude of savings likely to be realized in other areas given unsubstantiated assumptions regarding expected efficiency gains from business process re-engineering efforts and projected savings from sustainment, recapitalization, and base operating support," states the GAO in one section of the 273-page report that assesses the DOD's plans for base closure and realignment.

Previous BRAC rounds have seen a total of \$7.2 billion in net annual recurring savings with a cost of \$22 billion. This year's round is seen to save \$5.5 billion in recurring savings.

The GAO cites a few reasons why the up-front costs are higher for this round.

"The increase in costs is due partly to significant military construction and moving costs associated with Army recommendations to move

activities from leased space onto military installations," states the GAO.

According to its study, the GAO believes there will be no net savings seen in the Army either during the six-year period where BRAC recommendations are put in place or within 20 years. There are net savings seen in the Navy, Air Force, and Joint cross-service groups, however.

The GAO states personnel reductions in Armed Services staff constitute 47 percent of the net annual recurring savings with another 40 percent coming from operation and maintenance activities.

The report states the DOD "indicates the positions are expected to be reassigned to other areas, limiting dollar savings available for other uses."

The GAO's concern is that personnel are going to be assigned elsewhere in the Armed Services.

"Without recognition that these are not dollar savings that can be readily applied elsewhere, this could create a false sense of savings available for use in other areas traditionally cited as a beneficiary of BRAC savings, such as making more funds available for modernization and better maintenance of remaining facilities," states the GAO.

According to the report, there are also concerns about the sustainment, recapitalization and base operating support savings.

The GAO questions the savings claimed for facilities already scheduled to be demolished. The agency also questions savings projected by the DOD for facilities where a realignment is occurring. The GAO notes there are no specific plans for the extent of a facility's possible reuse or vacancy.

"The short-term impact is that these reduced savings could adversely affect DOD's plans for using these BRAC savings to help offset the up-front investment costs required to implement the recommendations and could further limit the

amount of savings available for transformation and modernization purposes," states the GAO.

Elsewhere, the agency raises concerns about the \$500 million expected savings for business process reengineering efforts.

"...the expected efficiency gains from these recommendations are based on assumptions that are subject to some uncertainty and have not been validated," the GAO argues.

The report notes that in this area of the DOD forecast the "estimates are based on assumptions that have undergone only limited testing."

The report, which was sent to Congressional committees, is titled "Military Bases: Analysis of DOD's 2005 Selection Process and Recommendations for Base Closures and Realignment."

It was issued earlier this month.

Local News Articles

Base Closings On Agenda At Hearing Today

San Antonio Express-News (San Antonio, TX)
Sig Christenson
July 11, 2005

When the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission opens a critical regional hearing this morning in downtown San Antonio, three experts will get roughly five minutes each to make the Alamo City's case.

The arguments for saving missions at risk and preserving big gains from this year's BRAC will be logical, precise and timed to the second. Discipline will be as tight as a troop inspection.

"There's no emotion at all in our presentation," said the city's BRAC point man, retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John G. Jernigan, "other than basically presenting a positive demeanor."

There's reason for confidence. As crunch time comes in the nation's fifth base-closure round, San Antonio is sitting pretty, poised to gain 3,500 jobs and up to \$1 billion in new

construction. That is a dramatic improvement over the last closure round, in 1995, when the city lost Kelly AFB and its skilled work force of 10,000 people.

Only one other city, El Paso — the state's biggest gainer, netting 11,000 troops for Fort Bliss — will have that kind of story to tell as San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger opens the proceedings in the Convention Center by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

But many in the crowd will have reason for nervousness as former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi joins three other commissioners at the hearing.

The biggest hit would come to Texarkana, where more than 4,500 workers at Red River Army Depot and the Lone Star Army Ammunition plant stand to lose their jobs. If the commission fails to reverse the closure order, Texarkana's 5.8 percent jobless rate could triple.

On the Gulf Coast, Ingleside Naval Station's shutdown would cost a thriving but once-dormant seaside town 3,900 jobs. Corpus Christi Naval Air Station stands to lose 1,000 workers, with a ripple effect officials there say could cost up to 8,000 jobs in the region.

Today's speakers, though, likely are to stress the national-security risks they see in the Pentagon's BRAC plan — rather than its debilitating economic impact.

"Naval Station Ingleside provides an incredible deterrent for the prospect of terrorism we fear here in South Texas," said Cathy Travis, a spokeswoman for Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi.

"We feel like there are some holes in the (Pentagon's) argument and the recommendation," said Jerry Sparks, who heads the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce's BRAC committee. "If not, we wouldn't be contesting it."

Each community will have its say, with those standing to be hurt the most getting the longest amount of time.

Texas and Arkansas, both of which are affected by Red River, will have 85 minutes. Corpus Christi-Ingleside gets 45 minutes. El Paso, Killeen, Wichita Falls, Abilene and Oklahoma will get their turn as well, with 20 minutes to a half hour to argue for changes that would benefit their towns and regions.

Their best chance lies in showing the military utility of their installations as well as the potentially devastating impact of losing them or important missions.

But emotional displays of support also will be in full view.

One group, the American Federation of Government Employees, will mount an "informational picket" outside the Convention Center starting at 11 a.m. It will protest the proposed closure of Brooks City-Base, Wilford Hall Medical Center and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service office here.

"The BRAC commission apparently has no concern that loyal federal workers will lose their jobs," said Rogelio "Roy" Flores, national vice president of AFGE's 10th District.

Three of the four commissioners at the hearing have ties to San Antonio but aren't likely to be swayed by such comments. Tom Hill, Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton and Sue Ellen Turner are retired generals familiar with union rhetoric.

Certain that emotional pleas will fall on deaf ears, Jernigan's San Antonio Area Military Missions Task Force, which also includes retired Air Force Col. Doug Williams and Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, wants to expose faulty facts and reasoning in the Pentagon's mammoth analysis used to justify the shuttering of 33 bases nationwide.

It won't try to save Brooks, a city-run facility that leases space to the Air Force, but the task force will try to keep key missions.

"The best people to present (testimony on other missions) are professionals who know what they're talking about," said Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff, who has helped map out the strategy for today's session.

Jernigan will argue for keeping Brooks' School of Aerospace Medicine and two other research labs in town. Williams, once assigned to the Air Intelligence Agency, will contend that Lackland AFB's Cryptologic Systems Group should remain here rather than move to Ohio.

Cigarroa, president of the University of Texas Health Science Center, will support the Pentagon's decision to make Fort Sam Houston a Defense Department Center for Joint Enlisted Training, an action that is to bring 9,364 jobs to the post but certain to hurt other installations.

Three more regional hearings will follow, with the BRAC commission making its first vote July 19 to add bases to the closure list. A final vote for bases to be added or taken off the list will occur in August.

No date for that make-or-break vote has been set, but BRAC commission spokesman Robert McCreary said the hearing isn't the end of the line. People still can file statements or additional information at the Web site www.brac.gov.

Hill told reporters that any flaws in the analysis will be factored into the commission's final recommendations, to be sent to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Defense Firms Consider Moving
Jobs May Follow Pentagon Changes
Washington Post (Washington DC)
Ellen McCarthy
July 11, 2005

Government contractors around the Capital Beltway already are scouting new office space and thinking about moving some of their employees in response to the planned redeployment of tens of thousands of defense personnel throughout the region.

But the disruption won't necessarily be all bad. Contractors also say the base and office closings recommended by a Pentagon commission could mean more business for them, and give them a chance to lure talented government professionals into the private sector.

In the two months since the Pentagon announced its base closure and reorganization plan, a proposal that would move 23,000 military workers out of Northern Virginia's close-in suburbs, the local government contracting community has been grappling with the potential implications for their businesses.

Though any changes would not be implemented for several years, contractors say they are watching the proposals and efforts to alter the plan closely.

What the government contractors will not do, executives say, is forfeit their projects. If the agencies go, the contractors plan to make every effort to follow. Those decisions could, in turn, deepen the economic impact on areas like Crystal City that are expected to lose jobs, while bolstering the economy around areas like Fort Belvoir where jobs are slated to be transferred.

"If our customer goes, we will, without question, go there," said Renato A. DiPentima, chief executive of Fairfax-based SRA International Inc.

Today, SRA has three floors of leased office space near the Skyline complex close to Baileys Crossroads in Fairfax County. Employees support the Defense Information Systems Agency, which is slated to move from Arlington to Fort Meade in Maryland. SRA managers already are looking at facilities in the Fort Meade area and likely would abandon the Skyline space if the change occurs.

DiPentima said those types of adjustments and the expense of relocating willing employees and hiring new ones are costs that companies like his will have to absorb. The other pitfall, he said, is that many employees have longstanding relationships and expertise with the federal

agencies they serve, ties that could be severed because of the relocations if employees decide not to move.

For small companies, the changes could be much more painful.

Four of the nine federal agencies that have hired Knowledge Consulting Group Inc. of Sterling to do information security work could be uprooted under the proposals. If it happens, the five-year old company will ask employees working with those agencies to follow them to their new locations, but chief executive Dusty Wince knows that might not be a popular option.

"Our employees are not necessarily going to want to relocate or drive an hour to get there," Wince said. "We'll have to put them on another mission or they'll leave my company. And when you're a 70-person company, you can't afford to have even one person leave."

The changes could also result in greater opportunities for some local contractors. If the government loses employees who don't want to relocate, their work might be farmed out to private-sector firms. And because the Washington area overall could gain 20,000 government workers -- most of them in locations like Fort Meade, the Aberdeen Proving Ground and Fort Belvoir -- ultimately there could be more work for contractors.

Nancy Lilly, president of JEM Engineering LLC, a small Laurel firm that designs and tests antennas, said she expects her business to increase if, as recommended, an Army communications unit relocates from New Jersey to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, northeast of Baltimore. She also expects to get more work from Fort Meade, which will gain workers under the base restructuring plan.

"In our case it's benefiting us instead of hurting us," Lilly said.

Executives at Alion Science and Technology in McLean also see the potential to profit because of the changes. The company already has begun talking with government officials about helping

with the work entailed in moving and consolidating agencies. Dave Powell, division manager for Alion's planning and programming unit, said government contractors always have to be ready for changes like these because contracts begin and end all the time.

"When a contract goes away, whether it relocated or not, we have to make adjustment. That's the nature of the business," Powell said.

Government contractors in the Washington area regularly say the biggest challenge they face is hiring qualified workers with security clearances, a golden ticket in the industry. Human resources officials and recruiters say they expect some federal workers will flip to the private sector when faced with the prospect of relocation.

But it hasn't happened yet, said Linda Drake, vice president of Government Contract Solutions Inc., a Vienna staffing firm that specializes in the defense industry.

"We hope it will release some of the supply, because it's such a tight market," Drake said. "It moves slowly. We haven't seen an influx of people looking to weigh their options, so far."

But some private-sector groups say the impact on the region's government contracting sector could be intensely negative in the long run. Officials from the Northern Virginia Technology Council argue that the changes chip away at the critical mass of intellect that has driven the Washington area economy. Local tech companies may add some good hires to their payrolls in the near term, says NVTC President Bobbie G. Kilberg, but the area could be hurt in decades to come because bright individuals attracted to government work will settle in other regions of the country.

The Missile Defense Agency, for example, is slated for relocation to Alabama from Northern Virginia.

"You'll lose that synergy that makes this region really unique," Kilberg said. "Dispersing and thus damaging the defense research capability of

the federal government is not a good thing for the local economy."

Contractors generally are reluctant to bite the hand that feeds them, so criticism of the Pentagon's plan is coming more from elected officials than executives themselves. But most admit that the changes are, if nothing else, a nuisance.

"If you ask them, 'Is this something that you want to have happen tomorrow?' all of them will tell you no," said DiPentima of SRA. "We wouldn't be normal if we didn't like to see our established relationships continue like they are. . . . What this requires is that we remain nimble."

Hope, Uncertainty For Willow Grove

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)

Marc Schogol

July 11, 2005

The Willow Grove air base had two chances to make an impression last week.

It was paid an official visit by a key decision-maker on U.S. base closings on Tuesday, and state politicians argued its case in Washington on Thursday. So have the odds improved that the Naval Air Base and Joint Reserve Station will escape closure?

"Yes, but..." seems to be the answer from those who attended lobbying opportunities before members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Yes, said Sen. Rick Santorum (R., Pa.), who accompanied commission chairman Anthony Principi on his tour of the base on Tuesday and testified before the entire commission in Washington two days later.

"I think we've increased the chances from 10 to 15 percent to 20 to 25 percent," he said. But "one in four, one in five... is still not a great chance."

Yes, agreed Adrian R. King Jr., director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

King noted that it was encouraging that Principi publicly cast some doubt on the Pentagon's decision to close Willow Grove after his visit to the Montgomery County base.

But it has not escaped notice that Principi and other commissioners have made similar hope-inducing remarks after visiting a number of other facilities on the closing list.

Principi wrote letters to the Pentagon after commission visits to bases in Maine, Missouri, New Mexico and Ohio. After the commission toured a listed military payroll office in Cleveland, Ohio, Principi asked the Department of Defense, "Why did DoD not consider other options?"

Pennsylvania officials seemed to put Principi's comments in perspective.

"He's not going to come out and say, 'You guys didn't make a very good presentation, boy, you guys have no shot!' " Santorum said.

Most get closed

"It's not that we don't want people... to get their hopes up," King said. "But they have to have the context properly set, to know the historical record."

Unfortunately for Willow Grove, the historical record is that most bases on the closing list get closed.

But Willow Grove was on the list in 1995 and escaped. The difference now is that Congress no longer has a large role in determining the initial list, and this year it can only approve or reject the final list.

The Defense Department has recommended closing more than 30 bases nationwide. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission can add and subtract bases from that list.

So Willow Grove could get a reprieve again, King said.

"We've done all we could possibly do to make a strong case for Willow Grove and other facilities across the state," he said. "It's a little like reading tea leaves."

What hasn't been left to chance is the unified arguments of those trying to save the base.

Gov. Rendell, Santorum, Sen. Arlen Specter (R., Pa.) and other state and local leaders have stressed that closing the base would adversely effect military preparedness and defense against terrorism.

They also say that the Pentagon's decision was improperly reached and did not properly give weight to its own stated priority of "jointness" - military facilities where all the different services have units.

Joint bases a plus

Willow Grove is one of only three joint bases in the country, and Principi said after his visit that he had taken note of that.

One of the biggest units is the Air National Guard's 111th Fighter Wing, which state officials have stressed is vital to homeland security in the Northeast Corridor. The state's appearance before the full commission in Washington on Thursday was on the same day as the terrorist bombings in London.

Specter tied the bombings to homeland security and the base's importance.

"We are at war, and we saw evidence of that in London today," Specter said at the hearing. "It is a little hard for me to understand, given the nature and quality of these operations, that they would consider shutting them down."

Whether Principi's post-visit remarks will be reflected in that final list is an open question, said Christine Kelley Cimko, head of realignment commission communications in 1993 and now an international communications firm's defense expert.

"I think he's doing that because he wants everybody to know that they're trying real hard to be thorough," she said.

"We're at war... and there are all sorts of very Solomon-like decisions that have to be made."

Smart Move To Plan For Life After Fort McPherson

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta, GA)

Maria Saporta

July 11, 2005

Behind the security gates at Fort McPherson lies a wonderland of majestic trees, historic buildings, tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, fashionable homes and acres and acres of green space.

It's a part of Atlanta that most locals have never seen.

But that could change if the recommendations of the 2005 round of the Base Realignment and Closure process are implemented. BRAC has called for the closing of Fort McPherson along with three other military bases in Georgia.

Fort McPherson, in southwest Atlanta near East Point, has 550 acres of rolling hills with 100-year-old trees as well as some buildings that date to the late 1800s.

"It's a place that has special meaning because of its beauty, because of its historical attributes," says Felker Ward, who has been tapped by Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin to chair the redevelopment of the base if it is closed. "I still get goose bumps when I'm involved with ceremonies on the parade field."

Ward, who was an inspired choice by Franklin to chair this effort, was stationed at Fort McPherson in 1967 after returning from Vietnam, where he was an Army pilot.

Nearly all of the last seven years of his 20-year military career were spent at Fort McPherson, which remains his geographic connection to the military.

He reached emeritus status after serving as civilian aide to the secretary of the Army. And he continues to use the commissary and visit the base for social occasions as do other retirees.

"Fort McPherson is the heartbeat of this area of our city," Ward says. "There are people working there who have worked there all their lives, people who were there 30 years ago when I retired. It's a place that's near and dear to me. My fondest hope is that the BRAC Commission will see the wisdom and not close either Fort McPherson or Fort Gillem (a Clayton County base also slated for closure)."

Yet as a military man, Ward believes the Atlanta community and all the stakeholders around Fort McPherson must prepare for the possibility that it will be closed.

"It would be imprudent to sit and wait until a final decision is made to do the planning," Ward says. Already, Ward is meeting with community and public officials to assure them that the planning process will be inclusive.

"We are going to start with a blank sheet of paper," he said. "My job is to create a platform so a myriad of ideas from every source can come and be aired."

Ward, 72, who has been a major player in the Atlanta business community for decades, received a degree in architecture before embarking on his military career. While stationed at Fort McPherson, Ward attended Emory Law School, graduating in 1971.

He practiced law for 15 years until he began his own investment firm, Pinnacle Investment Advisors, in 1988.

During that time, Ward has been a civic leader. Most recently, he served as president of the Atlanta Rotary Club. He is on the boards of AGL Resources, Atlanta Life Financial Group, Abrams Industries and the Atlanta Falcons.

And Ward has been willing to take on tough civic assignments. He mediated the 1980 racial

incidents in Wrightsville; he helped investigate the cheating scandal in the Atlanta Police Bureau in 1978; and he was appointed by former Gov. Joe Frank Harris to serve on the Forsyth County Biracial Committee after a brotherhood march was attacked by an angry white mob.

Ward was willing to accept the job to chair the local redevelopment authority for Fort McPherson because of its significance to the city.

"You have got 550 acres of some of the most beautiful real estate in Georgia," Ward says. "Think about what's being done with 127 acres at Atlantic Station, and you can see the potential of what you could do with 550 acres. This could be the next magnet for where people want to live in Atlanta."

In many ways, the amenities already exist. There's a bowling alley, a movie theater, a gymnasium, a library, a baseball field, a community center known as the Commons, existing residential areas from the prosperous "Staff Row" where the senior officers live to the more modest family housing areas.

The Department of Defense requires local redevelopment authorities to consider the needs of the homeless when looking for the reuse of the land. Several of the barracks could be converted to residences for the homeless as well as affordable housing.

The possibilities are endless. Fort McPherson is close to the Beltline. It has beautiful green spaces that could become city parks. The parade field could become an outdoor performing arts venue. There's a MARTA rail station at its front door. And there are several first-class office buildings that could become corporate headquarters for local companies.

As part of the redevelopment process, the Department of Defense usually donates the property if it is to be used for a public purpose. If the land is to be used for commercial purposes, it is then appraised and sold.

Ward said he expects the planning process to take a couple of years with the actual implementation occurring over a decade.

For Ward, this is a great way for him to give back to the community by working with all the various stakeholders to create a unified vision for a part of town that has been off-limits to most Atlantans.

"It's an opportunity to affect the momentum, the growth potential of south Atlanta and indeed all of Atlanta for years to come -- if we do it right," Ward says. "And we intend to do it right."

BRAC chairman visits Red River Army Depot in Texarkana

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Little Rock, AR)

David Hammer

July 11, 2005

The sight was impressive, Sen. Mark Pryor says: acres of Humvees and other vehicles damaged in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pryor hopes it impressed Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, when he drove through during a Sunday visit to Red River Army Depot in Texarkana, Texas.

"It's eye-opening when you see it for yourself," said Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., who is counting on swaying Principi because hundreds of Arkansans make the short trek across the state line to work at the Texas-side depot.

Anthony came to see a base that is slated for closure under recommendations by the U.S. Department of Defense. Two members of the BRAC Commission had already visited the base and the adjoining Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant last month and were greeted by 10,000 cheering base supporters, but Principi was not able to attend that time.

More than 2,600 civilians and 600 contractors work at the depot, making it the largest employer in the Texarkana area. About 440

people work at the ammunition plant, where employees make thousands of hand grenades and fuses for artillery shells.

Principi stopped in Texarkana before heading to San Antonio for a Monday hearing on Texas bases with the rest of the commission. He also plans to fly to Fort Smith, Ark., on Monday to see the 188th Fighter Wing, which has been recommended for severe cuts.

Caravans of Texarkana area base supporters were heading to San Antonio.

Joining Principi's tour Sunday were Sens. John Cornyn and Kay Bailey Hutchison and Rep. Ralph Hall, all Republicans from Texas; Pryor and Rep. Mike Ross, also D-Ark.; and several local officials.

"His tour is key to ensuring that he can make the most informed decisions possible as the BRAC process moves forward," Cornyn said.

Hutchison and Cornyn both praised Principi last month for deciding to visit Texarkana and another base in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Principi met with Arkansas' delegation in Pryor's office shortly after the base closure and realignment recommendations were released. A second meeting specifically on the Texarkana bases was held last month in Washington with both the Texas and Arkansas delegations.

But this was a chance for the members of Congress to show Principi Red River's strengths first-hand and brief him on the Lone Star operations next door. The lawmakers also had the chance to emphasize what they saw as shortcomings in the Defense Department's recommendation methods.

"For example, there's a work week the Department of Defense recognizes and when they applied it to Red River, they used some different work-week schedule than the military usually uses and it skewed the formula," Pryor said.

Also, Principi was shown the rubber pads that are made only at Red River to be inserted in treads for armored vehicles.

"The concern is, if they close and have to move the vulcanization process elsewhere, could they find somewhere else to do it?" Pryor said.

The BRAC Commission must make its final recommendations to President Bush by Aug. 8.

BRAC panel to hear Texas concerns in San Antonio

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (San Antonio, TX)
T.A. Badger
July 11, 2005

Losing Naval Station Ingleside would be a huge economic blow to the Corpus Christi area, but those trying to keep the base open won't focus on that negative impact when they address the federal panel deciding their fate.

Instead they'll use their precious 45 minutes before the Base Closure and Realignment Commission here Monday to talk up the military positives of Ingleside and why it should be taken off the lengthy list of installations facing closure.

"You cannot compromise any warfighting capability," Judy Hawley of Portland, a leader of the South Texas Military Facilities Task Force, said Sunday. "We believe closing Naval Station Ingleside does compromise warfighting."

Hawley and her group got a chance Sunday to plant that seed in the mind of BRAC chairman Anthony Principi during a brief tour of the mine warfare base on the north side of Corpus Christi Bay.

"He was very surprised by how new it was and that it had so many aspects," she said. "You don't get a sense of the possibilities unless you actually see them. It was critical that he saw that."

Principi, an Annapolis graduate and former ship's officer, and three other members of the nine-person commission will be in San Antonio to take testimony from communities that stand to be affected by the current round of base closures.

Thousands of Texans planned to rally for bases on the hit list, even if it meant traveling hours by bus to make themselves heard.

Some 500 people from the Texarkana area, where the Red River Army Depot and Lone Star Army Ammunition plant are both on the closure list, were scheduled to travel more than 400 miles to the BRAC hearing.

Texarkana officials say about 4,500 jobs would be lost - including about 500 held by Arkansans - and they want the commission to know how that would devastate the community.

"We have to touch their hearts," said Jerry Sparks, a business retention specialist with the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce. "I don't think they will be swayed by emotion, but I do think they can be touched so they can look at things with a different eye."

Principi on Sunday also visited the Red River depot, where thousands of Army vehicles damaged in the Iraq war have been repaired. It is the largest employer in the far northeast corner of the state and a neighboring area of Arkansas.

The Coastal Bend area could lose an estimated 7,000 jobs directly and indirectly linked to Ingleside and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, which would be reduced in size under the proposed BRAC plan.

But Hawley said her group won't spend much time talking about that economic downside because they don't think that will influence the BRAC commissioners, a few of whom have visited Ingleside.

"It's all about military value," she said. "You can see compassion in their eyes, but (considering economic harm) is not part of their directive."

Retired Army Gen. Thomas Hill, one of the BRAC commissioners, said he and his colleagues are keeping their minds open to worthy arguments for why a particular base should be spared.

"We are not a rubber stamp for anybody," Hill said Wednesday in San Antonio. "We're going to make the best-reasoned judgments that nine honest people can make."

While certain areas would suffer, Texas overall would gain 6,150 military and civilian jobs under the Defense Department's plan to close and realign 180 military bases nationwide, according to the Pentagon. Only Maryland and Georgia would see more benefit if the plan is adopted in its current form.

Other bases marked for closure include Brooks City-Base, formerly known as Brooks Air Force Base, in San Antonio. But officials here don't plan to fight too hard for Brooks during their 15-minute presentation because San Antonio would see a net gain of about 3,500 jobs, most of them at Fort Sam Houston, and as much as \$1 billion in new construction.

"As a San Antonian, I ought to fight to keep as much here as possible, but the recommendation to DoD (on realignment) is right," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, a former Brooks commander and head of the city's BRAC task force. "I don't want to lose credibility before the panel and say I'm going to fight every battle."

Sheppard AFB near Wichita Falls would stay open but lose 2,600 positions in the realignment plan. Hundreds from that area were expected to rally in San Antonio.

More than 600 people were expected from Abilene, where Dyess Air Force Base is slated to lose its 29 C-130 cargo planes. Although the Pentagon plan calls for the base to gain 29 B-1 bombers and about 375 personnel, residents are worried that may not happen.

Arsenal employees refuse to bail out until they learn about jobs

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Davenport, IA)
July 11, 2005

Most of the 2,000 workers who could lose their jobs at the Rock Island Arsenal if a planned military reorganization occurs have chosen to stay put until a final decision is made.

Two months after the Defense Department announced plans to transfer nearly a third of the jobs off Arsenal Island, the work force has remained quite steady.

A survey of the agencies that would be transferred off Arsenal Island if the recommendations are upheld shows that only 19 people have taken other jobs or retired since the May 13 Pentagon announcement.

It was not clear how many of those changes are due to the uncertainty prompted by the announcement. Only two have been confirmed a direct result of the proposal.

"I don't think there's any panic," said Tom Esparza, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 15. "I think people are holding their breath, watching this very closely.

The Defense Department recommendations still must be reviewed by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission and approved by President Bush and Congress. It likely will be late this year before a final decision comes. It could take up to six years to implement the changes.

The Defense Department has proposed moving the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, or TACOM, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Civilian Human Resource Agency and the northwest office of the Installation Management Agency off the island. That would affect about 2,000 people.

About 6,500 people work on the island. The Defense Department also has proposed moving the 1st U.S. Army headquarters from Fort

Gillem, Ga., to the Arsenal. That would bring in about 400 new people, meaning a net loss of about 1,600 jobs.

In the immediate aftermath of the Pentagon's announcement, there were reports of workers exploring job opportunities by making calls to local businesses. But Becky Montgomery, a spokeswoman for TACOM, called the number of departures fairly common for a two-month time frame.

"There are so many people on the installation, people move around all the time," she said.

One of the reasons for the steady reaction is that there have been a lot of changes at the installation, which has downsized considerably since the end of the Cold War.

"We've gone through numerous reductions in force over many, many years," said Roger Kromphardt, a counselor for the arsenal's employee assistance program.

Union officials say a lot of employees are weighing their options at this point, even if they are not acting just yet. Those might include job swaps, applying for openings at other agencies on the island or taking retirement.

The last option could prove to be a popular one. Thirty-five percent of the 1,130-person TACOM work force is eligible to retire with full benefits in four years. If only 20 percent of the work force, a figure that has been cited often, were to move, that could mean hundreds of federal workers retiring over the next few years.

Despite success stories, BRAC leaves much to fear

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Stratford, CT)
Matt Apuzzo
July 11, 2005

There was a time when the shelves at the South Main Package Store were filled with spirits for the Army machinists to take home after work.

The price tags are still there, clinging to empty shelf space.

These days, Alice Connolly doesn't stock much in her family business: Six liters of vodka, a few scattered bottles and boxes of table wine, a half-full cooler of beer.

It's been that way since 1997, when the Base Closure and Realignment Commission closed the Stratford Army Engine Plant across the street, wiping out 1,400 jobs.

The Pentagon's Office of Economic Assistance publishes a guide to recovering from base closure and highlights a number of success stories in which new industry blossoms.

"You know what you can do with those brochures?" said Janice Paige, a convenience store owner down the road from the plant. "Rip 'em up and throw 'em away."

Stratford is not a success story.

And for officials fighting to keep their bases open this year, Stratford represents their biggest fears.

"We're not going to be sold a bill of goods by people who want to tell a happy story," said U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., who was among a team of representatives that traveled to Boston last week trying to save Groton's submarine base and its more than 8,000 jobs. "There hasn't been a job yet created in Stratford as a result of that shutdown."

The Pentagon's base closure plans would result in a net loss of 29,005 military and civilian jobs nationwide. And while defense officials stand ready with economic aid and assistance, local leaders in towns hit hardest by the recommendations are concerned.

"It doesn't take much to understand what \$350 million in payroll means," said Portsmouth City Manager John Bohenko, whose city lies just over the border from Kittery, Maine, where the Naval shipyard stands to be closed. "And it could affect the local hardware store, the local

diner, the hospitality industry. It's one of those things that has a macro impact."

Dozens of congressional and state leaders from around the country have gone before the BRAC commissioners over the past several days and pleaded their case. More are scheduled to do so before the commissioners issue their recommendations to President Bush this fall.

BRAC spokesman C. James Schaefer said officials who are counting on their economic outlook to win over the commission shouldn't be too optimistic.

"They have to realize the commission is going to put a priority on military value first and foremost," Schaefer said.

Paige doesn't think that's fair. Her Stratford neighborhood built itself around the factory where tank engines were built for years. She hopes the town successfully redevelops the massive factory but notes that it's been 10 years since the BRAC decision and the Army still hasn't turned over the property to the town.

About 28 percent of abandoned military property has not been turned over to local officials for redevelopment, according to a Government Accountability Office report this year, leaving 49,000 acres unused nationwide.

Fort Ritchie at one time was the biggest employer in Washington County, Md. But the base closed in 1998 and, because of court wrangling and other holdups, land has yet to be transferred to the state.

"It has made our area go stagnant," grocer Greg DeLauter said. "We're in a county that's getting all these metropolitan people coming up out of D.C. In a county that's exploding with growth, our area is just stagnant."

About 1,400 jobs disappeared with the base, the GAO said, and about 350 jobs in town quickly faded, development officials said. Rich Rook, director of the county's quasi-public development agency, said he hopes the Army will turn over the property in about six months.

The biggest obstacle to transferring property is environmental cleanup, according to the GAO. The military is obligated to clean the property, though squabbling about how much cleanup to expect is common. Thirty-four bases closed since 1988 are on the Superfund list of worst toxic waste sites, and none is completely cleaned yet.

Groton's submarine base is among at least seven facilities proposed for closure that are polluted and the Pentagon has estimated it will cost more than \$700 million to clean them. Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard are among the polluted bases.

Mark Barnhart, former Stratford town manager, said he got all the development booklets and advice from the Pentagon when the engine plant was being closed.

"They certainly have had instances where they've banded about where things have worked well," Barnhart said. "It's a little harder to turn an older industrial brownfield into something positive."

DeLauro said she believes Connecticut made a strong pitch to keep the base open based on its military value. But she said officials aren't kidding themselves about the stakes.

"I think people pretty much understand the sense of what will happen if this closes down," she said.

San Antonio will gain more than it will lose under BRAC plan

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (San Antonio, TX)
T.A. Badger
July 10, 2005

Across Texas and the nation, cities with military bases on this year's closure list are getting ready for fierce fighting to save their valuable installations.

Not San Antonio.

It's not that this military-heavy town is volunteering to give up the former Brooks Air Force Base, which is among the proposed shutdowns by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Rather, any lack of fevered effort to save Brooks City-Base - a city-owned technology park with the Air Force as its dominant tenant - is more a case of San Antonio getting a terrific deal in this BRAC round and not wanting to mess it up.

"We would be getting more than we're losing," said Howard Peak, a former San Antonio mayor and head of a city panel that oversees Brooks. "We are saluting as good patriots and moving on."

Under the BRAC plan, to be finalized in September, San Antonio would see a gain of about 3,500 jobs and as much as \$1 billion in new construction.

The bulk of the jobs increase and new building would be at Fort Sam Houston, envisioned by the BRAC commission as the military's medical training center for enlisted personnel in the Army, Navy and Air Force. The plan would concentrate medical training personnel from several bases, including Sheppard Air Force Base near Wichita Falls.

The BRAC plan also calls for converting the venerable Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio into an outpatient clinic, and shifting most hospital functions across town to Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston.

Nearly a third of the 3,200 military-related jobs now at Brooks would also go to Fort Sam Houston as part of the medical consolidation. But the local BRAC committee says it will also try to keep the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, worth about 600 jobs, that would move to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

Retired Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, a former base commander at Brooks, said he will argue to keep

the school when the federal BRAC commission holds a hearing in San Antonio on Monday to discuss how the Pentagon's plan will impact the state. The hearing is the only one scheduled for Texas.

"Logically, you can argue that you can rebuild at Wright-Patterson, but my argument is, 'Why, when you already have it here?'" said Jernigan, who leads the San Antonio Military Missions Task Force.

Others are not ready to concede Brooks, a 1,300-acre expanse near downtown where, among other achievements, Tang was developed for the U.S. space program in the 1960s.

U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, whose congressional district includes the base and the homes of its workers, recalled the impact on thousands of San Antonio families when Kelly Air Force Base, then the city's largest employer, was marked for closure in the last BRAC round a decade ago.

"I understand that, for the San Antonio area as a whole, this year's BRAC recommendations would result in a net gain in jobs," Cuellar, a freshman Democrat from Laredo, said in a statement last month.

But, he added, "Brooks has been a major economic engine ... for years, and the men and women from ... San Antonio have worked hard to make Brooks one of the most efficient and creative military installations in the country."

The city took ownership of Brooks in 2002 under an agreement with the Air Force, allowing it rent-free use of the base's buildings. The city also bears the cost of police, emergency services and utilities, but has the right to develop available land. So far, a hospital and a pharmaceutical maker have signed up to build there, and other would-be employers have expressed interest in locating on the base.

If the Pentagon remains intent on pulling out at Brooks, the city wants it to happen sooner rather than later so the base can move on.

Peak, pointing to the still-incomplete closure of Kelly, anticipates the closure at Brooks could go on for years.

"If this doesn't happen for 10 years, our redevelopment efforts will be somewhat hampered," he said. "We need to move on to the next stage of things as quick as possible."

Louisiana officials to appeal proposed base closure

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (New Orleans, LA)
July 10, 2005

An effort to stop the proposed closure of the Naval Support Activity station in New Orleans will boil down to a two-hour presentation by Louisiana officials Thursday to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The base is on both sides of the Mississippi River, but most of the facility is in the Algiers section.

"This our last chance to appeal to them," said Kathy Honaker, executive director of the Algiers Economic Development Foundation.

On May 13, the Defense Department recommended closing 33 major bases and about 150 other installations around the nation, including the Naval Support Activity. Thursday's appeal to the commission will be heard in New Orleans, along with appeals from Mississippi and Florida. Each state will have two hours to tout its case.

One member of the commission, retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Turner, toured the Naval Support Activity on June 17.

Those scheduled to address the commission include Gov. Kathleen Blanco, U.S. Sens. Mary Landrieu and David Vitter, Congressman William Jefferson and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. Retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. David Mize, chairman of the Mayor's Military Advisory Committee of Greater New Orleans,

will handle the bulk of the city's presentation, Honaker said.

The hearing originally was scheduled for Tuesday but was pushed back two days because of Hurricane Dennis.

The Defense Department says it would save \$276 million during a 20-year period by closing the Naval Support Activity. The installation's closure could cost the city more than 1,200 military and civilian jobs and millions of dollars in payroll.

"Losing this base would deliver a devastating blow to our economy and community," Matt Konigsmark of the Mayor's Military Advisory Committee said.

Louisiana officials plan to push their "federal city" proposal to turn the Algiers installation into a \$200 million center for military and homeland security operations. The federal city campus would house a U.S. Coast Guard office now in downtown New Orleans; Navy, Marine and Army units currently spread throughout the city; and a possible regional homeland security office.

The Naval Support Activity currently employs more than 4,600 military and civilian workers, plus contractors whose numbers vary. The Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse stands to pick up the 1,800-worker national Marine Reserve headquarters that the Naval Support Activity is scheduled to lose.

The base commission, appointed by President Bush, can change the list before it is submitted to the White House and Congress in the fall. It has been 10 years since the last round of base closings.

Pascagoula, Meridian head to base closing hearing

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
(Pascagoula, MS)
July 10, 2005

Jackson County officials head into Thursday's federal base closing hearing hoping they have enough information to keep the Pascagoula Homeport open.

The hearing is in New Orleans. Officials from Meridian and Lauderdale also will attend to present their case against the realignment of Meridian's 186th Air Refueling Wing.

The hearing originally was scheduled for Tuesday but was pushed back two days because of Hurricane Dennis.

Several Mississippi military facilities are on the 2005 federal base realignment and closure, called BRAC, list.

The others are the hospital at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. The hospital would be operated as an outpatient facility rather than a full service hospital.

The Naval Support Facility, which is also known as Lakeside, would be closed. It is home to crews for Navy ships being built or repaired at Northrop Grumman Ship systems.

The personnel center at John C. Stennis Space Center in Hancock County would be moved to Philadelphia under the BRAC recommendations.

"That's one of the dumbest moves I've heard of," U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor said Friday of the Stennis facility. "They say they want to save money by not paying rent, but they're going to move it from one of the securest facilities in the country to Philadelphia, where they're either going to have to buy land and build or rent."

Savings is the reported reason for closing Lakeside, according to Navy officials, who said in May that they would consider renting blocks of apartments or hotel rooms in the county for crews instead of housing them in Lakeside.

Besides Taylor, Gov. Haley Barbour and U.S. Rep Chip Pickering, R-Miss., are expected to address the commission.

The regional hearing will cover BRAC issues from three states, Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida.

Don Knecht, chairman of the Singing River Diversification Committee, said the presentation will the naval station's strategic location in the Gulf of Mexico, providing quick access to deep water and its importance to the nation's homeland security because of its location near the Northrop Grumman Ship Systems Ingalls shipyard and Chevron's Pascagoula refinery, which is one of the largest in the country.

In Meridian, the Department of Defense proposal for the 186th will mean the redistribution of nine midair refueling airplanes, called KC-135R Stratotankers, to bases in three other states.

The 186th could lose 175 jobs under the Pentagon plan. The 186th is based at Key Field in Meridian. It employs nearly 1,200 people, more than 1,100 of them in military jobs.

Statewide, Mississippi would lose 1,678 military, civilian and contractor jobs at the military installations.

Hawthorne, Reno await BRAC member visits

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Reno, NV)
July 10, 2005

Nevada government and military officials remain cautiously optimistic that the Hawthorne Army Depot and the Reno Guard Air Base might be spared from closing and downsizing after a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission visits the two installations this week.

Philip Coyle, one of nine members of the BRAC, will tour the Hawthorne Army base Monday, which has been recommended for closure, and the Reno Air Guard facility, which would lose its eight C-130 cargo aircraft.

A second BRAC member, retired Army four-star general James T. Hill, will visit the two installations July 22.

The commission is charged with reviewing the Pentagon's plans to close 180 domestic military bases.

Fallon State Senator Mike McGinness described the upcoming visits as good news.

"The BRAC commissioners want the facts and want to make sure they have accurate information before they approve or reject the Pentagon's recommendations," McGinness said.

In addition to closing the Hawthorne base, the Pentagon wants to transfer the Air Guard's only flying assets to Arkansas.

McGinness, who represents Hawthorne and Mineral County in the Legislature, said the Pentagon's recommendations did not accurately reflect the economic impact, cost savings and military importance of the two bases should they be closed and downsized.

The Pentagon "pulled numbers out of the air" to justify closing Hawthorne, said Shelley Hartmann, executive director of the Mineral County Economic Development Authority.

"We feel the commissioners are independent, are serious and want to look at the facts," Hartmann added.

Coyle, an assistant secretary of defense in the Clinton administration, he will also attend a community meeting in the Mineral County High School gym, where local residents will stress the importance of the base to the area's economy.

**A Close Look At Base's Assets
Advocates have 45 minutes to convince**
Corpus Christi Caller-Times (Corpus Christi, TX)
Fanny S. Chirinos
July 10, 2005

The message three local Naval Station Ingleside advocates will give Base Realignment and Closure commissioners at Monday's regional hearing is that the base is a significant asset to homeland defense.

"We're going to concentrate on the base's military value because that's what will weigh most heavily with the commission," said retired Vice Admiral Al Konetzni. "The argument will work."

Konetzni, South Texas Military Facilities Task Force chairman Loyd Neal and former Mine Warfare Commander Paul Ryan will take part in the 45-minute presentation before four BRAC commissioners. The base's strategic location, its deep-water port capabilities and its double-decked pier will be among the main highlights of the argument in favor of keeping the base open.

The Department of Defense recommended closing the base on May 13. The department recommended closing the Ingleside base and moving its ships to San Diego and its helicopter squadron to Norfolk, Va. The Pentagon also recommended realigning a distribution center for the Corpus Christi Army Depot. Together, the recommendations would amount to a loss of 7,015 jobs.

The small portion of the presentation dealing with the depot would be cut out due to the time constraint, Neal said.

Nine Texas communities will present the arguments in favor of their respective military installations on Monday. Texas Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison determined the times for each community based on the impact each community would experience by the change. Some, like El Paso, were given 15 minutes while Texarkana received 55 minutes. Corpus Christi was given 45 minutes and Neal said more time was requested but it was denied.

"We would have liked to have had 10 more minutes, but we can certainly get the job done in 45 minutes," Neal said. "We've been working on this presentation for 2 1/2 years and we've

refined it. I've made the presentation hundreds of times to everyone except the president and vice president of the United States. There's no pressure for me."

Neal will take a few minutes to introduce the speakers, the logistics of the base and the argument. Konetzni will follow with about five minutes to discuss a strategic overview of the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence located at Naval Station Ingleside. Ryan will finish the argument by explaining how keeping the base open will not only save the Navy money, but will keep a military presence on the southern coast.

"It will cost the Department of Defense millions of dollars to move mine warfare elsewhere and millions more to dig a similar port at another location," Ryan said. "Having a naval station here (in Texas) protects the Gulf by its sheer presence. It deters any kind of terrorist activity from taking place."

The southern coast has many oil refineries and major port routes that would be left vulnerable if the base closes, Ryan said. Keeping the base open would cost the Navy \$27 million, but one ship full of oil is worth \$30 million.

"If our military presence deters damage to that ship, that one ship a year pays for the cost of the base," Ryan said.

Konetzni said other port locations along the southern coast cannot berth large ships for various reasons. Pascagoula has neither the port nor the pier, he added. Pensacola's port has been destroyed by hurricanes and Key West doesn't have maintenance facilities and it leases to cruise ships, Konetzni said.

Other key points will include keeping the center of excellence in South Texas to continue its job of training, maintaining and exercising ships and personnel for mine warfare missions.

"The Department of Defense might have made up their minds, but the commission hasn't," Neal said.

The commissioners have the option of asking questions after each presentation. Neal said the group is ready for any question, but would not be bothered if no question is asked.

"Questions are not an indication of support for or against the base," he said.

Workers Protest BRAC List Union says their rights are violated

Corpus Christi Caller-Times (Corpus Christi, TX)

Adriana Garza
July 10, 2005

More than 80 federal civilian employees from military installations across the state marched from Sherrill Park to the federal courthouse on Saturday protesting a potential base closure and realignment as well as a new federal personnel system, which union representatives say denies federal employees their rights.

Union members from the Corpus Christi Army Depot, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi and Naval Station Ingleside joined other union members from Lackland Air Force Base, Brooks Air Force Base and DFAS-San Antonio to voice their concerns.

Its first phase starting this month, the personnel system is a Department of Defense proposal to restructure the human resources management for civilian employees in the department. The system will establish new procedures and rules for hiring, pay, classification, performance management, disciplinary issues and labor-management relationships.

"We are upset that federal employees are taking a double hit from the Department of Defense," said John Gage, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees, referring to both BRAC and the personnel system. "We are hurting our veterans who have served this nation and now because of 9/11 and the Iraqi Wars, it's necessary to take away their rights."

Union officials say the personnel system violates workers' rights, would eliminate union bargaining rights and would implement a pay-for-performance system that would fail to secure employees annual raises.

Gage said the BRAC closure and realignment list was released prematurely, adding that the Pentagon has yet to release its report detailing defense needs.

The AFGE has joined six other unions in taking legal action against the Department of Defense for developing the personnel system despite its violations of established laws, said Joe Gonzales, Local 2142 AFGE president. He said defense officials did not consult union representatives when the new system was crafted.

Holy City to give panel a hand; BRAC offers Charleston team job after impressive presentation to save Navy facilities

The State (Columbia, SC)

Chuck Crumbo
July 10, 2005

Although they made a strong case last month to save 500 Navy engineering jobs, Charleston's military supporters will not be idle waiting for the base-closing commission's final decision.

Instead, they will be helping the commission out.

Charleston's presentation at a regional hearing of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) impressed the panel's members so much that they asked Holy City leaders to help the commission's analysts sort through the data.

Not a problem, said Tom Mikolajcik, co-chair of the Charleston BRAC effort. "All the data we have is the Navy's information. This is not something we drummed up."

Charleston officials already have turned over much of their studies and data to the base-closing commission and will be working with the panel's analysts.

Meeting in Charlotte, panelists offered hope for Charleston and other communities facing the Pentagon's ax.

"Just because we're leaving here today, that doesn't mean, Oh, well, that's it," said Philip Coyle, who chaired the June 28 hearing in Charlotte.

Charleston could lose up to 1,100 jobs if the Pentagon's recommendations are approved. Besides the engineering jobs, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also recommended a military payroll and accounting office be moved and jobs be trimmed from the Naval Weapons Station.

Overall, South Carolina came up a winner. Charleston's losses were offset by 1,800 jobs that will be added to Fort Jackson, McEntire Joint National Guard Base and Shaw Air Force Base, all in the Midlands.

One of the problems with the Defense Department's proposal to close Charleston's South Naval Facilities Engineering Command is that the Navy never considered keeping the facility there, said Mikolajcik, a retired brigadier general and former commander at Charleston Air Force Base.

"We heard two years ago that the Navy wanted to put (the engineering command) in Jacksonville," Mikolajcik said.

Among the reasons the Navy offered for moving the engineering command from Charleston was that it was in a leased building, not on a secure military base.

But the Pentagon did not take into account that the command could be moved into a building that will be vacated shortly by Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said William Lewis, a retired Navy captain and the engineering command's former chief. The finance building meets post-9/11 security standards, he added.

Instead of spending \$57 million to move the command to Jacksonville, Fla., the Navy could

save \$49 million by staying in Charleston, Lewis said.

That got the attention of the BRAC panel, which asked for more information and the help of Charleston's analysts.

One of the panel members who heard Charleston's case, retired Army Gen. James Hill, said the scenario offered by Lewis might be something the Navy did not consider, "but we can do that."

Another panel member, retired Adm. Hal Gehman, said information like that offered by the Charleston contingent "gives us something to work on."

Panel members said their job is not to rubber-stamp the recommendations that Rumsfeld released May 13. Instead, they are to ensure the Pentagon followed the law in making its decisions.

"We are essentially a jury," Gehman said.

Charleston's hopes to save the engineering command face a tight deadline. The nine-member commission votes Aug. 24 on what it will recommend to the president.

A simple majority of five votes is needed to take a base or facility off the closing list; a super majority of seven votes is required to add a base or facility to that list.

The commission's list is due on President Bush's desk by Sept. 8.

Bush can accept the panel's list, send it to Congress, or reject it. He cannot add or subtract bases and neither can Congress, a BRAC spokesman said.

Numbers don't add up
Officials say Texas would lose, not gain, jobs
 Times Record News (Times Record, TX)
 Suzanne Gamboa
 July 11, 2005

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon says it can save money and improve the armed forces by closing four Texas military bases and winnowing others, but state and community leaders say the Department of Defense is wrong.

Texas would gain 6,150 military and civilian jobs under the department's plan to close and realign 180 military bases nationwide, according to the Pentagon. Only two other states rank higher — Maryland with 9,293 job gains, and Georgia with 7,423, based on Pentagon estimates.

But after scrutinizing the proposal, some state officials say the plan actually would cost Texas at least 3,000 military jobs and scores more in civilian jobs. They will get a chance to argue that discrepancy, and other reasons the state's bases should be spared, during a hearing before the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission today in San Antonio.

Showing Pentagon errors in job loss calculations may be the best chance to remove bases from the closure list before the BRAC Commission makes its recommendations to President Bush this fall, said Chris Hellman, a military policy analyst for the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, a Washington think-tank that focuses on peace and security issues, including defense spending.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Clarendon, said the decision to move a medical training program from Sheppard Air Force Base to Fort Sam Houston was more of a medical recommendation than a proposal to make the best use of the base's facilities.

He also said no data is available to explain the Pentagon's proposal to move Joint Strike Fighter mechanics from Sheppard to Florida, costing an estimated 487 jobs in Wichita Falls under Pentagon estimates.

Killeen leaders say a major problem for them stems from the government counting 5,000 troops assigned last year to Fort Hood, the state's largest Army post, as temporary soldiers when locals considered them permanent.

The Pentagon proposes moving the soldiers to Fort Carson, Colo., and contends Fort Hood will nearly break even in the BRAC realignment.

"Fort Hood loses more troops under the BRAC recommendation than any other installation in Texas," said U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards of Waco, the ranking Democrat of a House Appropriations Subcommittee overseeing military construction and quality of life funding.

Other issues Texas officials plan to raise at today's hearing:

- Supporters of Naval Station Ingleside near Corpus Christi in southeast Texas argue that closing the base, along with one in Mississippi, would create a security problem because there would be no Navy ships in the Gulf of Mexico providing security.

- Texarkana officials say the Defense Department miscalculated the job losses by listing employment as 2,500 at the Red River Army Depot and only 150 at the ammunition plant next door. Locals contend 2,600 civilians and 600 contractors work at the depot, and 440 people work at the plant.

- The School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks City Base is scheduled to be transferred to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton, Ohio. The office of Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-San Antonio, said keeping the school in San Antonio would make sense because the Air Force is creating a military medical center at nearby Fort Sam Houston.

- Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio will lose more than 800 jobs, including contractors, under a Defense Department proposal to relocate the Cryptologic Systems Group, an intelligence unit, to other states.

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

