

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

July 23, 2005

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

### National News Articles

Veto threat raised against any attempts to delay BRAC

Move To Delay Base Closings Draws Veto Threat

The National Guard and homeland security

### Local News Articles

Defense jobs back in the game' (Cleveland, OH)

Louisiana Officials Go To The Mat For Military Bases (New Orleans, LA)

State's Military Role In Limbo (Miami, FL)

For Sub Base Backers, Mixed News From Capitol Chambers (Hartford, CT)

BRAC Panel Members To Visit Pope Air Force Base (Fayetteville, NC)

Illinois Sues To Prevent Closing Of Air Guard Base In Springfield (St. Louis, MO)

Closure Would Hit Hard In Galena (Fairbanks, AK)

BRAC prep draws from across all lines (Biloxi, MS)

Monterey officials ready arguments to keep military schools (Monterey, CA)

A Rudder, No Rubber Stamp (Hartford, CT)

Submariners' Views? A Good Question (Hartford, CT)

Warner Proposes BRAC Aid (Norfolk, VA)

Sub Officers Objected To Closing Base In Groton, Conn. (Boston, MA)

### Opinions/Editorials

Fast pursuit (Raleigh, NC)

Senator, Let's Launch (Richmond, VA)

### Additional Notes

N/A

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

### National News Articles

**Veto threat raised against any attempts to delay BRAC**

Government Executive

Megan Scully

July 23, 2005

The Bush administration once again has threatened to veto the \$441.6 billion fiscal 2006 defense authorization bill should it include provisions that weaken, delay or repeal the base-closure and realignment process under way, OMB officials wrote in a Statement of Administration Policy not yet made public.

The administration issued a similar warning shot this spring to the House, which strongly defeated all attempts to thwart the BRAC process. The administration "strongly opposes" the \$376 million cut in BRAC funding proposed by the Senate Armed Services Committee because it would slow base-closure implementation and cost the department "more money over the long term," according to the seven-page document.

OMB officials also wrote that senior administration officials would urge President Bush to veto a bill that includes any amendments limiting the Defense Department's ability to buy products from foreign companies.

"Such amendments would harm U.S. companies and workers, as foreign governments would likely respond by restricting U.S. suppliers' access to their procurement markets," the document states.

In the policy statement, the administration also attempts to resist deep budget cuts in the Joint Tactical Radio System, the Transformation Satellite Program and Space-Based Radar, key development programs that have all experienced delays. In addition, the Bush administration warned that it would veto the authorization bill if it includes language that would in any way regulate the "detention, treatment or trial" of captured terrorists.

Meanwhile, Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., criticized Majority Leader Bill Frist's, R-Tenn., decision to file a cloture petition Friday afternoon to limit debate on the defense authorization bill so the Senate can take up legislation on gun manufacturers' liability or estate-tax legislation before the August recess begins.

"If this cloture petition is successful, those who support it are sending one message: They do not believe the Senate should debate the important national security issues that are very much on the minds of our troops, their families and the American people," Reid said. Majority Whip Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., argued that the body would have ample time to debate the defense bill by midweek.

"I don't know that it's written on some tablet somewhere that we need to spend multiple, multiple weeks on the [defense] authorization bill," McConnell said.

The Senate is scheduled to vote Tuesday on the cloture motion. If cloture is invoked, the body will have 30 more hours to consider only germane amendments, considerably limiting action on a bill that typically attracts hundreds of amendments over several weeks of debate. Armed Services Chairman John Warner, R-Va., said Friday he gave Frist the green light Thursday night to file the cloture petition and would accept responsibility if the move "was an error."

Debate on the bill continued today, with the Senate spending most of the morning deliberating an amendment to strip money for a feasibility study on the controversial Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator program. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., introduced an amendment to shift that money to the National Guard, while Warner opposed it.

"I assure my colleagues, I assure the American public that Congress is carefully monitoring each step of this program," Warner said.

## **Move To Delay Base Closings Draws Veto Threat**

St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
Liz Sidoti  
July 23, 2005

WASHINGTON - President George W. Bush's administration is threatening to veto a sweeping defense bill if lawmakers try to delay the latest

round of military base closings to spare installations back home.

In a statement, the administration said it would "strongly oppose any amendment to weaken, delay or repeal" the base-closing process. The statement said Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld would recommend that Bush veto any bill that includes such a provision.

Republican Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, who is trying to save Ellsworth Air Force Base, late Thursday proposed an amendment to the defense bill that would require the Pentagon to complete several operational reviews and return U.S. troops from Iraq before Congress signs off on the final version of the base-closing plan.

Thune's amendment has the support of Republicans and Democrats from Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey and New Mexico.

The Senate debated the bill Friday but may not complete work on it until September.

It's unclear whether Senate leaders and top members of the Senate Armed Services Committee who oppose the provision - GOP Sens. John Warner of Virginia and John McCain of Arizona and Democratic Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan - have the votes to defeat it.

Base closings "should not occur while this country is engaged in a major war," Thune said.

Warner said the provision would "hold in limbo" the entire base-closing process. "You'd put a cloud of indecision and doubt over all the communities that will be affected," Warner said.

Thune's amendment is not the only one that could jeopardize the defense bill.

In its statement outlining its positions on the bill, the administration also said Bush advisers would recommend a veto if the bill includes provisions regulating the treatment of terrorism suspects in U.S. custody or establishing a commission to review their handling.

Such amendments would "interfere with the protection of Americans from terrorism by diverting resources from the war to answer unnecessary or duplicative inquiry or by restricting the president's ability to conduct the war effectively," the administration says.

Republicans, including McCain and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, plan to offer amendments on the treatment and rights of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. And Democrats plan an amendment that would set up an independent commission to review claims of U.S. abuse of prisoners at the camp or elsewhere.

### **The National Guard and homeland security**

The American Thinker  
July 22nd, 2005

Tectonic plates are moving in our Total Army force structure. Strategies and units are being realigned from the default Cold War stasis of decades past. World-wide operations in the War on Terror have shown that in many cases the National Guard is unable to satisfy the required troop strength levels for repeated overseas deployments without adversely affecting unit manning and recruitment goals.

For 30 years, the Guard has been largely configured as combat arms formations designed as a supplementary force to "round out" active Army combat divisions. In other words, reserve manpower to augment combat formations in mid- to high- intensity wars. The Army has wisely determined that the Guard's proper focus should return to protecting our homeland.

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau has announced a major strategy change for the Guard. Army Lt. Gen. Steven Blum said that the Guard will play a significant role in Homeland Defense and Homeland Security.

In an interview, Lt. Gen Blum noted that,

The Guard's homeland defense missions include supporting Coast Guard patrols of sea and

coastal areas, detecting and defending against air and missile attacks, protecting private infrastructure and responding to attacks involving weapons of mass destruction. In the event of an incident or crisis, DoD's and the nation's "reliance would be very heavy on the National Guard, both the Air Guard and Army Guard," Blum said.

This is a strong indication that the National Guard will revert to a more traditional role of remaining stateside to provide a much-needed military capability to handle a variety of homeland defense and security missions, including WMD response.

#### Strains on the old structure

It has been apparent that Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have stretched the Guard to its limit. Its units have deployed around the world and fought courageously alongside their active duty counterparts. But the Global War on Terror is not the one-time, "do or die" battle against the Warsaw Pact envisioned by defense planners in the 70s. The Guard now faces the prospect of extended deployments to hazardous and unpleasant spots around the world on a routine basis, and its ability to meet tough overseas deployment criteria for the long-term cannot be maintained.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is playing a characteristically smart game in making the available military resources go much farther and make better use of them for the new missions we face in the War on Terror. But he has also had to deal with a total force whose active component was cut too severely in the 90s. Defense planners had no choice but to include National Guard units in contingency mission force packages that were traditionally composed of active duty forces. The planners knew that these were missions the Guard would be hard-pressed to accomplish without an undue amount of preparation and training.

The new mission of the National Guard dovetails closely with the earlier-announced findings of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). It directed huge changes

in force structure realignment and armory consolidation.

When the BRAC list was released, a detailed breakout of "Closure and Realignment Impacts by State" it showed that over 170 small Army Reserve Centers and over 200 National Guard armories will be closed, saving several thousand military and civilian full-time technician spaces. A significant portion of the reserve force structure has been based on widely scattered, small detachments. Realists recognized that these small facilities were designed less to maximize training and mobilization capabilities, than to provide the opportunity for these units to contribute federal monies to districts all over the landscape. Districts, not at all coincidentally, represented by many, many legislators in Congress. For this reason, the Guard remained virtually untouched during the drawdown of the 90s.

The stateside mission emphasis for the National Guard also means that personnel spaces and units will have to be transferred to the active duty component to keep pace with the current operational tempo. In other words, this is a belated recognition that strategic need trumps the pork barrel when it comes to defense of the homeland. The active-reserve unit mix will change considerably.

#### The BRAC fight has begun

Over a decade of peacekeeping missions in relatively calm areas of the world put us asleep about too much of military preparedness. We can no longer afford it from a fiscal standpoint, but also from our national security posture. Every person and every dollar has to contribute to our ultimate victory. Nevertheless, business-as-usual politics has already started to rear its ugly head.

The Base Realignment and Closing Commission (BRAC) voted this last Tuesday to add several bases to the list of military facilities that could potentially be shut down to provide more flexibility in base closures and force structure realignment. BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said the commission felt that the addition of

more bases to the list submitted by SecDef Rumsfeld would give the commission a greater opportunity to visit more bases to possibly make adjustments to scheduled closures. Principi said,

"This commission knows what it is talking about and is not a rubber stamp. We are an independent check on the power of the secretary to close and realign military bases."

While the commission added some bases to the list, it also removed four large installations that had previously been scheduled for closure: the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego; the Naval Shipyard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Moody Air Force Base in Georgia; and Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

And, as predicted by AT almost three weeks ago, it appears that the most intense part of the base closure fight will be over the Reserve and National Guard units. The commission has "serious reservations" about the scheduled closure or realignment of dozens of Air National Guard bases across the country. The recommended closure of over 350 Reserve Centers and National Guard armories and airfields promises to be the most contentious political fight over military assets in recent memory. Already the commission has delayed a vote on the Air National Guard airfields and is "working behind the scenes to determine what to do with that part of the proposal."

Expect more complaints on troop strength, prisoner abuse at GITMO, and verbal abuse towards the SecDef from all the usual suspects as they attempt to derail one of the most comprehensive and strategically sound force structure realignments in over 30 years. We will now see who is serious about national security, and who isn't.

### **Local News Articles**

#### **Defense jobs back in the game'**

Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)

Becky Gaylord

July 22, 2005

The head of the commission deciding which military facilities to close gave hope this week to supporters of a huge pay office in downtown Cleveland, which had landed on the Pentagon's hit list in May.

The chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, Anthony Principi, went to Sen. George Voinovich's office in Washington on Tuesday afternoon to talk with him and three other Ohio political leaders: Sen. Mike DeWine and Reps. Steve LaTourette of Concord Township and David Hobson of Springfield.

"Cleveland's back in the game," Voinovich recalled Principi saying.

"I don't know if Cleveland is home free yet," said LaTourette, the most vociferous critic of the plan to dismantle the local Defense Finance and Accounting Service office. But, he added, "we've received observations that give me reason to be optimistic."

Principi was unavailable to comment.

Before the meeting with the lawmakers, the nine-member commission Principi heads had voted unanimously to re-evaluate the Pentagon plan to combine DFAS offices from 26 into just three: in Columbus, Denver and Indianapolis.

In Voinovich's office, "The indication was there would be more than three sites chosen," Voinovich recalled. Cleveland is fourth in Pentagon rankings of major DFAS offices.

The Pentagon has proposed a wide-scale plan to close and shrink military bases and offices nationwide to save \$50 billion over 20 years. The Cleveland DFAS office, which employs 1,200 and has a payroll of more than \$50 million, would lose more than 90 percent of its workers.

Since June, Cleveland DFAS supporters have unearthed flaw after significant flaw in the data the Defense Department used to rank facilities. Adjusting the rankings for the mistakes -- such as wildly inflating rental costs of the local office,

underreporting the unique functions it performs and basic rounding errors in the math -- would move Cleveland to the top, supporters argued.

The latest discovery involves an unusual deal between the General Services Administration, the federal government's landlord, and the Defense Department. The DFAS center in Indianapolis, housed in a GSA facility, got a \$123 million renovation two years ago. Although the GSA owns the building, it didn't pay for the work, LaTourette discovered. Instead, the Defense Department footed the bill and got, in return, artificially low rent from the GSA: nearly half what the rate would have been.

The congressman's staff also found that the Pentagon had artificially inflated Cleveland's rental rate about 85 percent, much higher than the GSA had previously acknowledged to LaTourette.

The information "literally made my jaw drop," LaTourette wrote Principi in a letter dated July 19. "It is egregiously unfair that Cleveland DFAS is being penalized first by bogus data provided to the BRAC Commission and second by a sweetheart lease agreement," LaTourette wrote, "wherein the rental rates in Indianapolis are intentionally suppressed far below market rates."

Supporters of Cleveland DFAS say their arguments resonated with Principi and the eight other members of the independent commission.

"They saw things that had been ignored," Voinovich said.

LaTourette and others suggest that the process has been so ham-handed, it appears rigged. "Something smells," LaTourette said. "Somebody came up with the brainy idea that there were going to be three centers despite the facts."

This week's plot twist won't likely be the last, either.

Despite their recent encouragement, supporters of the Cleveland office vow to keep digging for information that could boost its standing.

"It's a new ball game, and we're out there trying," Voinovich said. "Nobody should relax one minute."

The independent base closure commission will unveil its final list of military facilities to close at the end of August. It goes to President Bush, who can pass it to Congress to approve or disapprove.

### **Louisiana Officials Go To The Mat For Military Bases**

**Disputing federal data, they tell panel: U.S. needs local facilities**

New Orleans Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

Paul Purpura

July 23, 2005

Opting for an empirical appeal rather than an emotional plea, Louisiana's elected leaders urged a federal panel Friday to cast aside "flawed data" used by the Defense Department to recommend closure of New Orleans' Naval Support Activity and support the creation of a "federal city" in Algiers.

"It's much more than a concept," New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin told three members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. "It's an implementation plan that's ready to be rolled out once you give us the word."

Before a crowd of more than 100 people, many of them wearing red, white and blue T-shirts emblazoned with "New Orleans Supports Our Military," Louisiana's delegation, led by U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., laid out its case, which included a plea from Slidell Mayor Ben Morris to keep the Defense Information Systems Agency center in his town.

After New Orleans' presentation, peppered with occasional applause and cheers from the audience, one commissioner, retired Army Gen. James Hill, asked Gov. Kathleen Blanco

whether she could assure that state financing could be in place within two years to create the federal city, which could cost as much as \$200 million.

"We believe we can certainly assure the money," Blanco told Hill.

Blanco, joined by other elected officials, reiterated the pledge in a news conference afterward, saying that Hill's question left them feeling that the federal city concept has a good shot at becoming reality.

"I feel very optimistic after the power-packed presentation," Blanco said.

Data takes a beating

Elected leaders hammered away at the Defense Department data, saying the federal agency and the Navy botched the numbers they used as the basis for the closure recommendation.

"It's rife with misinformation," Morris said of the BRAC report, which also includes a demographic look at St. Tammany Parish that he called "a figment of someone's imagination."

The Defense Department estimates \$276 million in savings over 20 years by closing the Naval Support Activity, a figure that is "grossly, grossly inflated," said U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La.

Based on the city's review of the data in recent weeks, the actual savings would be about \$20 million, said retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. David Mize, who is leading the charge to save the base.

And while the Defense Department said about 1,200 military and civilian jobs would be lost to the city, Mize said the figure is more than 2,000, because the Navy did not include 863 contract jobs in its analysis.

"This would be a net loss that New Orleans would have a difficult time absorbing," Nagin said.

Additionally, Mize said, the Defense Department report does not include the cost of buying out a family housing management contract with a private firm in Algiers. The buyout could cost the Defense Department up to \$11 million, he said.

"This alone in our mind is reason enough to remove the base from the list," Vitter said.

'Out-BRAC-ed'

The Defense Department wants to close 33 major bases nationwide and shutter and shuffle hundreds of smaller installations in an effort to save money. New Orleans officials on Friday said the federal city plan is in line with that goal.

"We have produced a plan that has out-BRAC-ed the BRAC plan," Nagin said of the Defense Department proposal.

Local officials estimate a \$230 million savings to the Defense Department if the new campus is approved and could be opened by 2008, Mize said, adding that former senior military leaders based in New Orleans have supported leaving the aged Bywater facilities for new ones in Algiers.

"The military has pushed for this more than the community has," said Mize, who lived at Naval Support Activity in Algiers as commander of Marine Forces Reserve at the base from 1998 to 2001.

The plan calls for construction of a modern campus in Algiers that would house the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve headquarters, the 8th Coast Guard District headquarters, the Army Reserve's 377th Theater Support Command and a regional Homeland Security Department office, if New Orleans gets one. The Bywater portion of Naval Support Activity would close.

Blanco has pledged, and the Legislature has supported, as much as \$100 million in financing for the facility, with city money also being used.

After what he called an "excellent presentation" by Mize, Hill called the federal city concept "a very intriguing recommendation."

The presentation triggered standing applause. Lawrence Rout, who could lose his job as a human resource assistant with the Naval Reserve Personnel Center at Naval Support Activity in Bywater, was among them.

Under BRAC, the center would move to Millington, Tenn.

Rout, 57, a Vietnam War veteran, said he would retire rather than move, but he worried about his 90 or so civilian co-workers at the personnel center.

"It's going to hurt tremendously," he said. "If they can't sell the federal city deal, we're done. It don't bother me because I can retire. But there are a lot of professional people who would be hurt."

U.S. Rep. William Jefferson, D-New Orleans, said that although closing Naval Support Activity would damage the area's economy, the loss of military personnel who have helped in the community would also be hurtful. "We as a community are benefiting from their good works," Jefferson said.

North shore base

Morris urged the commission to keep the Defense Information Systems Agency center's 151 jobs in Slidell instead of moving them to Fort Meade in Maryland to be consolidated with similar centers. The mayor also suggested that the facility could be enlarged by moving about 40 high-tech jobs in Virginia to Slidell.

The city owns the 16-acre site on which the center sits and leases it to the military for \$1 a year, Morris said. Closing it and moving the jobs to new facilities in Maryland would cost the Defense Department \$64.4 million, he said.

"I think there should be little doubt of what should be done here," said Morris, who disputed

the Defense Department's claim that the center lacks adequate security.

He also told the commissioners that St. Tammany Parish has a large military population, attributed to the respected public school system and low family housing costs. "The impact of what you do with (Naval Support Activity) and DISA is going to be huge on St. Tammany," Morris said.

Sept. 8 deadline

Landrieu praised the state's presentation, saying it was not "an emotional plea" to keep the bases open, but rather was "well-crafted, very sophisticated, thoughtful."

The BRAC Commission also heard arguments from Mississippi and Florida officials who oppose closures and military downsizing in their states. Commissioners, who voted this week to add bases to the BRAC list, also can remove bases from the list.

The nine-member commission must submit its report to President Bush by Sept. 8, and he can accept or reject the list. If Bush approves it, Congress would have 45 legislative days to reject the list but cannot change it.

Hill told the Louisiana delegation that the commission will be independent in its work.

"We're no one's blank check or rubber stamp," Hill said.

### **State's Military Role In Limbo Gov. Jeb Bush and U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson spoke of Florida's ideal location while pushing for added military jobs in the state.**

Miami Herald (Miami, FL)

Cain Burdeau

July 23, 2005

NEW ORLEANS - Florida Gov. Jeb Bush on Friday told a commission looking at streamlining U.S. military bases to put more military resources into Florida, which he called "the most military friendly state in the country."

Officials from Louisiana and Mississippi also lined up Friday to try to persuade the Base Closure and Realignment Commission that closing bases and scrapping programs in their states would be a mistake. It was the last of several scheduled regional hearings around the nation.

Florida is poised to gain jobs overall despite big losses at Pensacola. According to Pentagon figures, Florida would gain 2,757 jobs.

Florida officials argued against cuts at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, which is called the "cradle of naval aviation" because of the area's long history as a Navy training and operations center.

Under the Pentagon's plan, the base's Navy Officer Training Command would be moved to Newport, R.I., and other training programs would be consolidated with the Navy's personnel bureau at Millington, Tenn.

Florida officials say moving training to Rhode Island makes little sense because many officers would still return to Pensacola for more training.

Instead, Florida officials argued that Pensacola should become an even larger training center because it would be a better investment than Rhode Island.

With 18,700 square miles of restricted air space in the Gulf of Mexico, a sunny climate and relatively low cost of living, Pensacola is an ideal site for the Navy, retired Vice Admiral Jack Fetterman told the commission. Fetterman spoke on behalf of the air station.

"We in Pensacola love it, believe in it. We have a good quality of life," he said. "We believe it is a high risk move to execute this plan."

Streamlining the base is estimated to cost 302 military jobs and about 1,280 civilian and contractor jobs.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., highlighted Florida's location on the Gulf and Atlantic

Ocean as ideal airspace for weapons systems training.

He called the Pentagon's recommendations "illogical" because they do not take advantage of Florida's existing military infrastructure.

Bush acknowledged that the commission faced tough decisions and that it was necessary to streamline the military, but he stressed that the military should add programs in Florida. He pointed out that the state has both educational and other programs that favor military personnel and their families.

"All of these initiatives have made Florida the most military friendly state in the nation," he said.

Bush also argued that Florida's geography is ideally suited for expanding the military's presence in the state.

"The value of our bases is not just about brick and mortar, it's about the land, air and sea operating spaces around our bases," he said.

Florida is also pushing to make the Naval Station Mayport, near Jacksonville, a home base for nuclear aircraft carriers.

The commission must give its recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president must accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety. If he accepts them, Congress would have 45 legislative days or until the end of its 2005 session to reject the recommendations in their entirety or they become final.

If they are rejected, the commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revised report to the president.

The president has until Nov. 7 to approve a revised report and send it to Congress.

The Pentagon then has six years to close, relocate or downsize bases on the final list.

In Washington, President Bush's administration is threatening to veto a sweeping defense bill if

lawmakers try to delay the latest round of base closures to spare installations back home.

In a statement, the administration said it would "strongly oppose any amendment to weaken, delay or repeal".

Republican Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, who is trying to save Ellsworth Air Force Base in his home state, late Thursday proposed an amendment to the defense bill that would require the Pentagon to complete several operational reviews and return U.S. troops from Iraq before Congress signs off on the final version of the base-closing plan.

Thune's amendment has the support of Republicans and Democrats from Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey and New Mexico.

The Senate debated the bill Friday but may not complete work on it until September.

It's unclear whether Senate leaders and top members of the Senate Armed Services Committee who oppose the provision -- GOP Sens. John Warner of Virginia and John McCain of Arizona and Democratic Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan -- have the votes to defeat it.

### **For Sub Base Backers, Mixed News From Capitol Chambers**

Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT)  
David Lightman  
July 23, 2005

WASHINGTON -- Four powerful House Republican chairmen Friday gave the Naval Submarine Base in Groton strong support as they argued that the base's proposed closing is based on faulty data.

But that news was tempered somewhat across the Capitol as the Senate considered a measure to delay the latest round of base closings.

The White House warned in a statement it would "strongly oppose any amendment to weaken, delay or repeal" the process and suggested it

could veto the entire defense bill if such a provision were included.

The Senate debate, which will continue next week, is being led by Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., whose state faces the loss of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

He got support from Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., who in a Senate floor speech invoked the London public transit attacks of July 7 and 21.

"The news from London reminds us in the most stark and stunning ways that we are at war," he said. "In the midst of such a war it seems the reduction of these base structures has to be done with real care, because we may look back and say this rush to judgment has been a dash to disaster."

The proposed delay, an amendment to a broad Senate defense bill, would halt any closings until a number of studies are complete, notably the Defense Secretary's Quadrennial Defense Review, due to be submitted to the president early next year.

Currently, the base closing commission must give its report to the White House by Sept. 8. The president then has until Sept. 23 to act. He can either submit it to Congress or return it to the commission.

Should the president seek a re-evaluation, the commission would have until Oct. 20 to resubmit the report, and the president would have to give the plan to Congress by Nov. 7.

Once Congress receives the report, it has 45 days to reject the findings in full, or the recommendations become law.

The House Friday offered more encouraging news to Groton. The Pentagon recommendation to shutter the base "does not conform to the Navy's true force needs," the four House chairmen wrote to Anthony J. Principi, chairman of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, which is considering the facility's fate.

"Closing New London will tie the SSN [attack submarine] force to an insufficient force level and destroy the world's best submarine base in exchange for little or no savings," they warned.

Signing the two-page letter were Reps. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., House Appropriations Committee chairman; Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., House Armed Services Committee chairman; C.W. "Bill" Young, R-Fla., defense appropriations subcommittee chairman, and Roscoe Bartlett, R-Md., projection forces subcommittee chairman.

They noted that in May, Navy officials told Congress that the submarine force level is likely to be in the low 40s, even though the Pentagon in the past put the number higher.

The four called the low estimate "a gross departure from future plans," and said "such a force level could not safely address the growing undersea warfare threats facing the United States."

In addition, they contended, closing the Groton base "would eliminate valuable berthing and facilities, locking the Navy into a dangerously low force level."

Moving the base's 18 attack subs to Norfolk and Kings Bay, Ga., "would cede valuable surge capacity and squander the nation's leading submarine base," they said.

The letter was no surprise; Hunter and Bartlett have long been considered friends of the base, and Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, whose district includes Groton, is an armed services committee member.

### **BRAC Panel Members To Visit Pope Air Force Base**

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)

Henry Cuningham

July 23, 2005

Two members of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission will visit Pope Air Force Base on Aug. 2.

Retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman and retired Army Gen. James T. Hill will visit the base. Gehman made an initial visit to Pope as a commissioner May 24.

Bill Martin, president of the Cumberland County Business Council, hopes their visit includes a public meeting. The Business Council opposes Pentagon plans to move the 43rd Airlift Wing from Pope.

If not, Martin said he hopes the state's congressional delegation can arrange a meeting involving local officials and the commissioners.

The nine-member commission is reviewing the Pentagon's 2005 plan to close or realign military bases in the United States. The commission voted Tuesday on Capitol Hill to single out the Pope recommendations for further consideration. Final decisions are scheduled for the week of Aug. 22.

"I am encouraged that the BRAC Commission voted to further consider an alternative realignment of Pope Air Force Base," Rep. Robin Hayes said in a statement.

The BRAC commission is the only institution that can change the plan. The commission's report is due to the president Sept. 8. President Bush can only approve the plan or send it back for more work.

Congress has an up or down vote on the entire package.

For years, the Air Force has planned to replace Pope's Vietnam-era C-130Es cargo planes with the C-130J, which is supposed to fly higher, faster and farther and has updated avionics computer technology.

The Pentagon on May 13 proposed that Pope be turned over to Fort Bragg and that the active-duty wing of C-130s be replaced by an active-reserve squadron of C-130Hs. The H-model

airplanes are newer than the E models, but they are not as up-to-date as the C-130Js.

"It is important for the commission to continue its analysis of this issue and to give the number of C-130s originally planned to be stationed at the base a more in-depth look," Hayes said in his statement.

Gov. Mike Easley has asked Anthony Principi, the BRAC chairman, to reverse the recommendation to replace the wing with a reserve squadron. U.S. Sen. Richard Burr asked the commission to "give serious consideration to maintaining the current Air Force presence at Pope."

### **Illinois Sues To Prevent Closing Of Air Guard Base In Springfield**

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, MO)  
Philip Dine  
July 22, 2005

WASHINGTON - Illinois went to court Thursday to prevent the Pentagon and the Base Realignment and Closure Commission from closing the Air National Guard 183rd F-16 Fighter Wing in Springfield.

The state's lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Springfield, argues that taking the planes from the base without the consent of Gov. Rod Blagojevich violates federal law. That proposal is contained in Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's list of recommended base closings.

"We are taking our case to federal court because the Department of Defense did not coordinate this recommendation with either my office or the Illinois adjutant general," Blagojevich said Thursday. "I will not give my consent."

Illinois' nuclear power plants, locks and dams and strategic sites in Chicago would be threatened if the planes were moved, he said.

Missouri stands to lose the 131st F-15 Fighter Wing at Lambert Field. The state is looking at various ways to protect the base.

"A lawsuit is an option for Missouri, one that the governor is considering," said Jessica Robinson, press secretary to Gov. Matt Blunt. She noted that Blunt has made similar arguments to the base commission about the lack of consultation and the role the 131st plays in protecting Missouri's residents and strategic assets.

The fact that the commission has asked the Justice Department for a ruling on whether closing bases without governors' approval is legal shows the arguments are being taken seriously, Robinson said. At a hearing this week, commissioners said the action could compromise homeland security and harm future recruiting efforts.

Illinois' suit follows similar action last week by Pennsylvania.

Christopher Hellman, a base-closing expert at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, said the lawsuits could complicate the process.

"The Guard issue, but particularly the Air National Guard issue, has taken on a life of its own. It's clearly on the minds of the members of the commission," Hellman said.

By suing, Illinois and Pennsylvania are indicating they want a ruling from a "neutral third party." Filing in separate jurisdictions by the states raises the prospect of at least one favorable ruling, and an eventual decision by the Supreme Court, he said.

The suits could affect the process in several ways because they are unlikely to be settled before the commission's Sept. 8 deadline for submitting its final list to President George W. Bush, Hellman said. He cited four possibilities:

The Pentagon and the commission come up with a compromise before Sept. 8, with the states withdrawing their suits.

The commission goes ahead with the process, setting aside the issue of the suits, with the idea that when and if the courts rule, the matter will be revisited.

The commission separates the Guard issue from other base closures and realignments, proceeding with the rest while holding off on Guard changes. But that would create a clamor for exemptions from supporters of other types of bases, Hellman said.

The indefinite delay or unraveling of the whole base-closing process results, with a member of the Senate calling for a halt until officials "get this figured out."

### **Closure Would Hit Hard In Galena**

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, AK)

Sam Bishop

July 22, 2005

WASHINGTON--Most of the \$11 million the U.S. Air Force spends to maintain facilities in Galena goes to a subsidiary of Chugach Alaska Corp. that employs 44 people in the village.

Those and other jobs are under scrutiny now that the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission has voted to add the Galena base to its potential closure list.

Chugach, the Anchorage-based regional Native corporation for the Prince William Sound area, has an \$8.5 million contract with the Air Force to maintain facilities at Galena. The town of 700 sits on the north bank of the Yukon River about 275 miles west of Fairbanks.

Galena at one time hosted fighters on constant alert to intercept aircraft from the former Soviet Union. When that threat faded in the early 1990s, the Air Force removed the fighters and hired a contractor to maintain the facilities for less frequent use.

BRAC commissioners suggested Tuesday that Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks could handle Galena's reduced functions. That's regardless of whether Eielson, as proposed by the Pentagon, loses most of its Air Force personnel and all its resident jets.

Chugach maintains both the Galena facilities and a similar installation at King Salmon on the Alaska Peninsula. However, the \$8.5 million figure covers just the Galena work, according to Maj. James Law, spokesman for the Alaskan Command at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage.

Beth Welty, communications specialist with Chugach, said the subsidiary, Chugach Support Services, has 44 employees in Galena. The number varies slightly by season.

The company maintains several structures, operates the water and wastewater plant and provides food and lodging for Air Force personnel, she said.

Galena City Manager Marvin Yoder said the Air Force structures include a headquarters building, a large auto maintenance shop, a fire department with about a half-dozen vehicles and a boiler plant. The contract workers also maintain a runway barrier system used to arrest aircraft.

After the Chugach contract, the next largest expense for the Air Force at Galena is electricity, which will cost between \$1.35 million and \$1.45 million for the fiscal year ending Oct. 1, according to the figures from Law.

The Air Force also expects to pay the state of Alaska \$442,000 to plow and brush the 7,200-foot runway, keeping it clear of hard-packed snow. That money is on top of about \$180,000 the state spends from its own treasury to maintain the runway.

The Air Force pays another \$58,000 to lease communications circuits, \$21,000 to dump garbage at the landfill and \$5,000 for right-of-way leases.

It all adds up to between \$10.4 million and \$11.3 million for the current fiscal year, Law said.

The staff estimated that closure of the Galena facilities would eliminate about 2.2 percent of the jobs in the Galena region.

Yoder, though, estimated 25 percent of the jobs in town's immediate area could disappear. He said his estimate differs from the commission's for several reasons. First, the commission figure covered the entire Galena region, which includes the villages of Nulato, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Ruby and Huslia. The impact on Galena alone is relatively larger.

Also, he said, the commission figure appears to only count the people employed by Chugach at the Air Force facilities.

Those facilities, though, also house a boarding and vocational school run by the Galena School District. If the district has to bear the entire cost of running the base's central heating system, it might not be affordable, Yoder said. If the boarding and vocational school shuts down, that will cut another 30 jobs.

The extra state positions necessary to clear the runway to Air Force standards also would end, Yoder said.

The Air Force also has at least 60 projects scheduled in Galena through 2012, the end of the BRAC process window, Law said. The larger projects involve repairing the runway arrest barriers, replacing the approach lighting feeder and fixing the water and electrical systems, he said.

Commission staff said dropping these projects could save up to \$30 million.

Yoder said he hears F-15s, which are based at Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage, land at the Galena runway occasionally. In the spring of 2004, the Air Force stationed five jets at the base, three of which stayed for almost a month, Yoder said.

"You can always tell the F-15s--they make lots of racket, but it's always good to see them," he said.

Galena's future wasn't discussed at a June 15 hearing in Fairbanks, where the focus was on the much larger realignment of Eielson.

The BRAC commission asked the Air Force on July 1 why it hadn't proposed to shut down the Galena station when it put together the base closure and realignment recommendations released May 13.

Air Force officials told the commission in a letter last week that they left Galena off the list because of its "operational role." Also, "it had no day-to-day force structure assigned," meaning no Air Force personnel are there. However, Air Force officials said they had no objections to closing Galena and moving its mission to Eielson.

On Tuesday in Washington, D.C., the commission voted 9-0 to add Galena to the preliminary list of recommended base closings. The decision doesn't mean the commission has decided the base should close. It preserves the option and lets staff and commissioners study the idea.

By law, at least two commissioners must now visit Galena.

The commission still must vote next month on whether to keep Galena on the list. The final list will go to the president by Sept. 8. He can ask for changes but then must approve or reject the list in its entirety. After that, it goes to Congress, which has 45 legislative days to reject it or it will become law.

### **BRAC prep draws from across all lines; Bi-partisan, business, military leaders have joined forces**

Biloxi Sun Herald (Biloxi, MS)  
Michael Newsom  
July 22, 2005

Mississippi Democrats and Republicans crossed aisles and jumped into the trenches to fight a government recommendation to take away Keesler Medical Center's in-patient care.

Members of the Mississippi Military Communities Council, a group made up of congressional and senatorial staffers, economic development interests and retired military

personnel, among others, were commissioned to defend Keesler, Naval Station Pascagoula, the 186th Air National Guard Refueling Wing in Meridian and the Human Resources department at Stennis Space Center.

About 40 MMCC members have been poring over thousands of pages of documents relating to the Base Realignment and Closure commission's recommendation to close Keesler Medical Center, along with three other South Mississippi installations.

The groups have been preparing for months, and in some cases even years, for the BRAC regional hearing today in New Orleans.

The meetings have uncovered some errors in the BRAC data, which the groups believe will strengthen their presentations.

Brian Martin, policy director for Democratic Rep. Gene Taylor, said there is a bipartisan effort to collect data and bounce ideas off each other as they prepare presentations for three members of the nine-member commission.

He said the preparations for Keesler have been a "team effort" of about 20 people, including members of Republican Sen. Trent Lott's office, who have been very helpful, Martin said.

"We probably put in four or five requests for data. Sen. Lott put in about the same," Martin said. "We had questions about Tricare, (such as) 'where did this number come from?' 'How do you get your number about the civilian capacity?' Sen. Lott has asked a lot of those type questions."

Martin uncovered an error in the data, in which Keesler was given no points for the condition of the building and its equipment. The career number-cruncher and Hurley native uncovered the mistake in the score and plugged in the numbers the cross-service group had collected in its research to give Keesler a score of 11.25 instead of zero.

With the 11.25-point boost, Keesler would move up 44 spots in the health-care services ranking.

Martin and staffers from Lott's office have been meeting with members of the South Mississippi community and have weekly conference calls from Biloxi to Taylor's office in Washington.

Lott spokesperson Lee Youngblood said the senator and Taylor see eye-to-eye on BRAC.

"Sen. Lott has been critical of the BRAC process since the beginning," he said.

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Clark Griffith, president of the Biloxi Bay Chamber of Commerce, has been involved in the BRAC research process for several years, through his work in South Mississippi economic development. He was a natural fit on the board because of his military background.

"It has been really good, with everybody from Sen. Lott's people, Congressman Taylor, the CEO and CFOs of the hospitals downtown sharing information," Griffith said.

Griffith will be presenting at the regional hearing, and said he thinks the case to keep Keesler's in-patient care is strong.

"If you are on the front lines in Iraq and someone is about to put their hand into your belly to remove a bullet, you are not going to look up and ask them the age and conditions of the building," Griffith said. "You are going to ask them when was the last time they performed this procedure."

Griffith and other MMCC members have been working on BRAC cases for several years, unpaid. Local economic development groups and the state government have paid expenses.

One such expense was the hiring The Rhoads Group, a Washington-based consulting firm that has advised local groups about how to defend installations from closure.

Another major player in the defense of Keesler and other Mississippi installations is Mississippi Power. A spokesperson said the utilities company's employees believe Keesler has a

measurable role in economic development in South Mississippi.

"It is an economic development issue, something that we have emphasized since our beginning in 1925. It is a quality-of-life issue in the communities we serve. We all live in the communities we serve," said Mississippi Power's Kurt Brautigam.

Representatives from the company have been present at most of the local strategy meetings concerning the installations.

The man charged by the Gov. Haley Barbour's office with coordinating all the MMCC meetings is Bill Crawford, director of the Mississippi Development Authority.

Crawford has worked with the MMCC in previous BRACs in Meridian in 1991, 1993 and 1995. He said the regional hearing today is not the end for the MMCC.

"An awful lot of work goes into this presentation, but it is really anti-climatic, in that nothing happens at the meeting, they are just receiving information," Crawford said. "This is just the first step in getting them to change."

After the hearing, the group will be meeting with analysts from the commission until a final recommendation is made in August.

### **Monterey officials ready arguments to keep military schools**

Contra Costa Times (Contra Costa, CA)  
Julia Reynolds  
July 22, 2005

With the renewed possibility that the Naval Postgraduate School and Defense Language Institute could be shuttered, local officials are again revving into high gear for the frenzied lobbying to come.

Rep. Sam Farr, D-Carmel, and Monterey City Manager Fred Meurer, who have worked for years to keep the schools in Monterey, met Tuesday evening in Washington to spend

"quality time" mulling strategies for the critical weeks ahead, said Farr spokeswoman Jessica Schafer.

They had just been stunned to learn that NPS and DLI are on the list of bases to be considered for closure or consolidation.

The decision to close or move the schools now rests mostly in the hands of the nine members of the independent-minded Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and that group made its clout felt Tuesday when it surprised Meurer and others by suggesting that Monterey's two military schools could be moved to Ohio.

The commission's analysts will spend the next four weeks scrutinizing two basic scenarios, according to Fred Cohn, Monterey's deputy city manager, with a possible wild card or two thrown in.

The analysts have already researched and recommended an option that city officials also support: merging NPS and DLI with Ohio's Air Force Institute of Technology, which would be moved to Monterey.

That scenario seemed to be the only one the commission would consider -- until Tuesday's hearing, when retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd "Fig" Newton surprised BRAC-watchers by asking: Why not move the Monterey schools to Ohio?

The closure panel has requested new data from the Pentagon, Cohn said, to seriously investigate the possibility.

Meurer, Farr and former Congressman Leon Panetta are preparing to counter the proposal any way they can -- by "phone, face to face and e-mails" with commissioners and their staff, Cohn said, "even smoke signals."

"We'll be responding about the schools' military value," he said, stressing Monterey's proximity to resources such as the nonproliferation studies program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and the area's oceanographic research labs.

"If you take that away, it's not in the best interests of the country," Cohn said.

Bending the ears of harried commissioners while community leaders around the nation try to make similar cases will be a challenge.

Two commission members, former Utah Congressman James Hansen and retired Adm. Harold Gehman, are tentatively scheduled to visit the Monterey installations Aug. 8, accompanied by the commission's chairman, Anthony Principi.

That visit is causing concern because the three will have little time for details, as they plan to hold a regional public hearing in San Francisco the same day.

"I'm not sure they realize how far San Francisco is from Monterey," Schafer said. Farr and others are hoping the commission will reschedule or hold the hearing in Monterey.

Farr has requested a meeting in Washington with Principi, and has asked the Navy for numbers and data on all possible scenarios, including one mentioned Tuesday by Principi: privatization.

That's the wild card in the mix, because no one seems to know exactly what Principi means by the term. With precious little time left before the commission takes its final vote in late August, Farr and Meurer are trying to get a handle on specifics about the panel's interest in privatizing the schools.

"There are lots of privatization options," he said. "The problem is, we don't know what options they're considering."

"The classic approach is to let civilian organizations handle the schools' missions," Cohn said. That could mean the schools still offer language studies and graduate research programs, but to a civilian student body, he said.

That, among many unknowns, has officials scrambling to be prepared for any possibility,

including what to do if the bases are closed and the military sells the real estate they sit on.

In the next week or two, Cohn said, the city should receive the results of a Pentagon-funded study examining alternative uses for both sites.

Tuesday night, the City Council approved an ordinance to re-zone four of NPS' five land parcels in the event they become available for city or private use.

One of those parcels, called the Navy Annex, is home to NPS tenants Naval Research Lab and Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanographic Center, neither of which is on the closure list, but could find the land under them sold or "realigned" anyway.

"That's kind of a dark hole right now," Cohn said. "No one knows what will happen."

Months ago, when NPS and DLI were considered by many to be safe from closure. Cohn said the same thing about the whole BRAC process.

### **A Rudder, No Rubber Stamp; Principi, Head Of Panel On Bases' Future, Charts Independent Course On Sites Like Groton**

Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT)

David Lightman

July 22, 2005

Veterans advocates gush about Anthony J. Principi. But they didn't always like how he fought their fights.

Principi, 61, chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, was secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the first four years of the Bush administration, and his experience in that post offers strong clues to how he handles his new task.

"He was very candid, very open," said U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, who chaired a House veterans health subcommittee when Principi was secretary.

A decorated Vietnam Navy veteran who won a Bronze Star with Combat "V," Navy commendation medals, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and other honors, Principi is a Naval Academy graduate and longtime congressional staffer on armed services and veterans affairs committees. The New York City native also has a law degree from Seton Hall University.

"He had been there and done that. He understood his constituency unusually well," said Jerry Newberry, spokesman for Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The encouraging news for Connecticut interests fighting to save the Naval Submarine Base in Groton is that Principi has a history of being forthright and passionate when he wants something.

"He tells you what's on his mind," Simmons said.

What's on his mind now is that the Northeast, particularly New England, could be getting shortchanged in the BRAC process. The region, he told a BRAC hearing Tuesday, has been "virtually abandoned" because the Pentagon wants to shutter seven major facilities.

Principi, who is married to Elizabeth Ann Ahlering, a retired Navy attorney, and has three grown children, is known to friends as Tony. They praise his down-to-earth style, his ease with conversation.

But during his Cabinet stint, Principi found himself part of an administration that veterans, and apparently the secretary himself, regarded as too stingy. As much as he fought behind the scenes for more aid, he often lost.

Principi last year took a rare step for a Cabinet member when he publicly said he had sought more budget money than the White House proposed.

He seemed to be sympathetic to efforts by Republicans to increase spending. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman

Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., and a group of congressmen, including Simmons, warned that without more budget money, veterans faced higher co-payments and "rationing of health care services, leading to long waiting times or other equally unacceptable reductions in services to veterans."

They lost that bid, and paid a price. When Congress reconvened in January, House leaders installed a chairman friendlier to the administration, and Simmons lost his subcommittee post.

Principi said he would not return for the second Bush term, but did not say his frustration with the budget was a reason. Many veterans observers, though, thought he had tired of such fights.

Veterans groups lamented his departure, believing they had lost a friend -- even though some thought Principi "could have done a lot more," said David Autry, spokesman for Disabled American Veterans.

Simmons and others maintained Principi did what he could. Simmons, also a Vietnam veteran, recalled how deftly Principi was able to revamp the veterans hospital and health care system without causing much of a political uproar.

"I had anticipated my colleagues would be on my back every day," Simmons recalled, "but they weren't."

If there's a difference between Principi's task at BRAC and his mission at the VA, it's that he doesn't have to answer to the White House. This time, he's the chief consensus-builder on the nine-person panel, the leader in crafting recommendations due on the president's desk on Sept. 8.

Principi-watchers see his pre-Cabinet resume as a useful indicator of how he will act.

A graduate of Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, where he played football, and president of the Student Bar Association at

Seton Hall, he later held a series of staff jobs in Congress and at the VA in the 1980s and 1990s, the kind of work that involves spending long days meeting with constituency groups, trying to balance their concerns, and then hashing out the sentence-by-sentence details of legislation.

Members of Congress may broker the compromises and make the final pushes that create laws, but staff members are known for their ability to satisfy -- or reject -- the multitude of interests that pass through congressional doors.

Principi learned how to be "an advocate with power and strength," recalled Rick Jones, national legislative director of American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

That ability to make friends, find consensus, remain outspoken and get things done has been on display throughout the BRAC process. Tuesday, for instance, the chairman was clear in his views that the Northeast risked being shortchanged, yet he also went along with the proposal to add Maine's Brunswick Naval Air Station to the list of possible closings.

After Tuesday's meeting, Principi was asked to clarify his remarks about the Northeast.

He talked about his concern that "much has been closed down," and stressed the importance of having military facilities spread out across the country.

And he stressed how he would not drop that line of thinking -- and no one could muzzle him.

"If anything happened today," he said, "I think it demonstrated that this commission knows what it's talking about and is not a rubber stamp."

**Submariners' Views? A Good Question;**  
Advocates Of Groton Base Pen Strong Letter To Principi  
Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT)  
Jesse Hamilton  
July 22, 2005

In a bureaucratic battle where victory and defeat could be separated by subtle shades of meaning, Connecticut is pushing a new, highly focused argument to keep its submarine base from closing.

"Team Connecticut" launched another letter Thursday to Anthony Principi, chairman of the commission that is compiling the Base Realignment and Closure list -- using the words of one of the Navy's highest officials against himself.

Meanwhile, advocates of the Groton base noted at least one sign that previous work may have paid off -- an unexpected visit to Groton of two more BRAC commissioners, announced Thursday. Base defenders have also been cultivating ties with retired admirals who are willing to speak out on behalf of Groton, such as Adm. Bruce DeMars, who met with U.S. Sens. Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd and U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, on Thursday.

The letter to Principi, signed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell and the state's congressional delegation, detailed a previous written exchange between Simmons and Adm. Vern Clark, chief of naval operations. On June 23, Simmons sent a letter to Clark asking how involved the submarine community had been in developing the "force structure plan" that was used in the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations. The plan for 20 years into the future calls for the fleet of 54 nuclear fast-attack submarines to decline to a number between 37 and 41.

Clark, set to be replaced by Adm. Mike Mullen as chief of operations this morning, sent a one-page reply on Monday. He wrote that in compiling the 2004 force study, the submarine warfare division "expressed concerns" about the assumptions made in the study on issues such as "operational availability" -- how quickly subs could be docked and returned to service. Some of the concerns were resolved, he wrote. "Others were not."

His letter also addressed how field commanders' requests for subs often go unanswered. But, he

wrote, such requests must be balanced ``with the best global warfighting and presence posture."

The Connecticut group's letter to Principi disparaged Clark's admission that submariners' concerns weren't resolved. The letter claims: ``The Department of Defense's failure to correctly assess our nation's required [submarine] force levels is a substantial deviation from the BRAC criteria that undermines the recommendation to close [the Groton base]."

``The BRAC process depends on an accurate and dependable force structure plan," it concluded, suggesting the assumptions that went into the plan the Pentagon used were ``unrealistic and potentially dangerous."

Simmons said he and his staff stayed up half the night Wednesday analyzing the five paragraphs of Clark's letter. He thinks it demonstrates that submariners' views were ignored. But he also is frustrated at what Clark had to say about ``presence." The Navy is called upon to make sure its vessels are seen in ports all over the world -- sometimes even conducting public-relations tours. Clark claimed the requests for these missions would require a fleet size requirement that can't be met.

But Simmons thinks he's wrongly including subs in that issue. Unlike the surface fleet, when subs travel the world -- even in peacetime -- they are actively collecting intelligence, Simmons said.

``These are critical missions," he said. ``It is not like having a cocktail party on the fantail of an aircraft carrier."

Rich Harris, spokesman for the governor, said Rell believes ``the Defense Department is not listening to the concerns that the submariners have about the future size of the underwater force. The number of subs this country needs has yet to be determined, and the governor feels it's wrong to prejudice the situation by closing the Groton base."

The Groton advocates have found new allies in that argument. Simmons and the senators met

Thursday with retired Adm. DeMars, who was director of the naval nuclear propulsion program.

He wrote a letter to the commission July 11, which said: ``This naval administration has indicated that we have the wrong Navy -- they prefer smaller, swifter surface ships rather than aircraft carriers and submarines. While not subjecting the matter to open discussion, they have taken many actions to advance this premise. The recommendation to close the submarine base is the most unthoughtful of the lot."

The Connecticut politicians expect to see more former submarine leaders like him go public with their opinions. Simmons said they talked with DeMars about other submariners ``who might be willing to weigh in on all of this."

In the end, Connecticut must persuade five of nine BRAC commissioners to oppose the Pentagon. Some think a Thursday announcement by the commission might mean two of them are questioning Pentagon recommendations enough that they have decided to visit the Groton base next week.

On Wednesday, Commissioners Sue E. Turner, a retired Air Force brigadier general, and Samuel K. Skinner, former chief of staff under the previous Bush administration, are touring the base. Four others visited May 31, meaning six of the nine will have seen this base firsthand when they vote. One, retired Adm. Harold Gehman, has decided not to vote on Groton because many of its subs would go to Virginia, where he worked on that state's base-defending efforts.

John Markowicz, chairman of the Groton-backing Subbase Realignment Coalition, spoke excitedly about the commissioners' last-minute visit. ``It means that Skinner and Turner have questions about the sub base," he said.

Simmons called it a ``good sign," especially if those visiting have any doubts.

``I don't think there's any point in reading tea leaves," Harris cautioned. But he also said, ``The

governor feels that the more these commissioners have a chance to see the base, the more they'll be impressed."

### **Warner Proposes BRAC Aid**

The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

Christina Nuckols

July 22, 2005

RICHMOND -- Gov. Mark R. Warner said Thursday he will push for \$ 25 million in state aid to help Virginia cities and counties facing economic crisis due to federal decisions to shutter or downsize their military bases.

The money could be used for roads and other infrastructure, environmental clean up, and training for displaced workers, Warner aides said.

" ... we recognize that changing defense requirements will likely lead to the shifting of personnel and facilities from some areas to others," Warner said in a written statement. "We plan to use this funding to help affected communities with the transition, and to show the Department of Defense that Virginia remains an active and cooperative partner."

Warner spokesman Kevin Hall said the governor hopes the proposal will bolster the state's effort to shield major installations like Oceana Naval Air Station from cuts. The aid announcement comes two days after the Base Realignment and Closure commission voted to consider closing or downgrading Oceana.

"I wouldn't underestimate the potential impact on the BRAC process by Virginia stepping up in this way to again put its money where its mouth is in support of military communities," Hall said.

To obtain the state funds, local governments and regional coalitions would be required to come up with matching dollars.

Twenty-four military installations in Virginia stand to gain or lose manpower or be closed during this year's BRAC deliberations. Eight of those bases are located in Hampton Roads. In

addition to Oceana, the sites that could be affected by the reshuffling are Fort Monroe in Hampton, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Norfolk Naval Station, Portsmouth Naval Medical Center, Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Fort Story and Langley Air Force Base.

Some of the \$ 25 million also would be available to localities that host military bases recommended for expansions.

Hall said the money is an initial investment rather than the total aid that Virginia will likely need to spend in response to the military restructuring. He noted that major road improvements will be needed at Fort Lee in Petersburg and Fort Belvoir in Fairfax, both of which are slated for major expansions.

"This \$ 25 million doesn't built a lot of road or a lot of infrastructure," he said.

However, he said the aid could be used for projects such as an environmental clean up of munitions at Fort Monroe, allowing the property to be more speedily transferred to local governments for re development if it is flagged for closure.

Top budget leaders in the General Assembly signaled their support for the governor's proposal, and Virginia Beach lawmakers also welcomed the news.

"It's a good-faith effort," said Del. Terrie L. Suit, R-Virginia Beach. "It shows a real positive sign to the local communities that the state will be here to aid with the transition."

Sen. Kenneth W. Stolle, R-Virginia Beach, thanked Warner for his efforts in a telephone conversation Thursday.

"It's a very good move on the governor's part," Stolle said.

Stolle said he believes Oceana will avoid major cuts. He said if it were shut down, however, the \$ 25 million would be a "drop in the bucket" compared to the economic effect that action would have on Virginia Beach and the state.

Even so, Stolle said the governor's proposal is a "very generous offer" because it represents virtually all of this year's budget surplus that wasn't already earmarked for other purposes.

A strong economy and last year's tax increases helped to generate \$ 544.4 million in revenue collections beyond what was needed to operate state government programs for the year that ended June 30. Most of that surplus must be set aside in the state's emergency reserves or for water pollution clean up initiatives.

The BRAC Commission announced Thursday that four of its nine members will tour Oceana on Aug. 1, and five members will conduct a public hearing on Oceana in Washington on Aug. 10.

The base closing law requires that at least two members visit every installation targeted for closure.

The Washington hearing is expected to include presentations on behalf of preserving the base by state and local elected officials and the area's representatives in Congress. It is not clear whether the panel will hear from anti-noise activists who have pressed for downsizing Oceana.

### **Sub Officers Objected To Closing Base In Groton, Conn.**

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)

Bryan Bender

July 22, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Navy's top submarine officers disagreed with the study used to justify closing the base in Groton, Conn., raising questions about the Pentagon's military rationale for shuttering Naval Submarine Base New London, according to previously undisclosed documents.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon Clark, who is set to step down from his post today, said in a July 18 response to congressional inquiries that the submarine

division at Navy headquarters did not sign off on the findings of the Navy's 2004 Force Structure Assessment. That evaluation of future needs was used as a key foundation for the Pentagon plan to close or realign dozens of bases across the country, including Groton -- the largest base in New England that is set to close.

The Navy study concluded that the service will need from 37 to 41 attack submarines over the next two decades -- versus the current 51 -- despite the concerns expressed by the submarine community that those numbers would not be enough to meet the growing demands for submarines both in peacetime and during conflicts, according to Clark's letter and interviews with others knowledgeable about the internal Navy deliberations.

"In the course of this study, [the submarine division] expressed concerns regarding operational availability assumptions and factors used in modeling the analysis, and made recommendations concerning these assumptions and factors," Clark told Representative Rob Simmons, a Connecticut Republican who represents Groton. Clark added that while some of those concerns were resolved, "others were not."

Connecticut officials yesterday seized on Clark's letter as further evidence that the Pentagon relied on faulty analysis in recommending which bases to close. They said it strengthens their argument to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission that the decision to shutter Groton and slash 8,600 jobs would not only cause significant economic hardship for the region but also does not make military sense.

"It is increasingly clear that the Defense Department miscalculated the submarine force the Navy needs to safeguard our nation," Governor M. Jodi Rell said in a statement issued by her office. "There is disagreement at the highest levels about the number of subs we need to perform critical missions around the world."

A top Navy officer confirmed that the submarine division did not agree with the 2004 analysis, but he emphasized that "the submariners' view

of the world" did not fully appreciate that other forces could fulfill similar missions. Speaking on condition that he not be named, the officer said "the top leadership was pretty comfortable" with the study's findings.

Under the Pentagon plan, the submarines stationed at the Groton base would be transferred to ports in Virginia and Georgia as part of an overall consolidation of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps units around the country.

The recommendation, if adopted, would be an especially hard blow to New England, which is slated to lose a large share of its remaining military facilities, including bases in Massachusetts and Maine. The Groton base not only accounts for thousands of jobs, but pumps billions of dollars into the region's economy, which is still heavily dependent on shipbuilding and the overhaul of submarines and warships. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, is on the chopping block for many of the same reasons as Groton.

The loss of the Groton base could also have a domino effect on the nearby Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics and its more than 8,000 employees, a major manufacturing center, local officials say.

Groton was recommended for closure based primarily on the findings of the 2004 Navy study; specifically, that the submarine fleet is shrinking and the base is therefore no longer needed, according to Pentagon officials and BRAC staff members.

But according to officials knowledgeable about the Navy's internal deliberations, submarine officers disagreed with several assumptions upon which the analysis was based.

Among them was the assumption that the Navy will be able to station nine attack submarines on the US territory of Guam in the Western Pacific, even though the island is now capable of accommodating only three. The submarine division at Navy headquarters concluded that upgrading the Guam base would require massive

investments and would also be risky because tropical storms frequently strike the island.

A larger concern, however, was that a submarine force level of between 37 and 41 attack submarines would require the Navy to rely too heavily on the remaining subs and their crews to meet all required missions.

Vice Admiral Charles L. Munns, commander of Naval Submarine Forces, recently testified to Congress that 54 attack submarines were needed well into the future to meet the heavy demands placed on the fleet, including conducting intelligence missions, protecting critical sea lanes around the world, and being at the ready in the event of hostilities.

Fleet commanders have also objected to closing Groton. In fact, getting rid of the base was the only closure recommendation opposed by the Navy's Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for coordinating and training the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

The commands' two most recent leaders, Admiral William J. Fallon and Admiral John B. Nathman, argued for keeping Groton, according to Navy and BRAC officials and congressional aides.

Meanwhile, the command's deputy, Vice Admiral Kevin Cosgriff, told Simmons in a conversation last month that closure of the base would undermine the overall readiness of the fleet, negatively impact day-to-day maintenance of the nation's submarines, and require substantial investments in the base at Kings Bay, Ga., to replace the Naval Submarine School now located at the Groton facility.

Connecticut's congressional delegation and the governor's office yesterday provided a copy of Clark's letter to BRAC chairman Anthony Principi, noting that the military's plans for its force structure over the next 20 years was one of the most important criteria for base closing decisions.

"The Department of Defense's failure to correctly assess our nation's required [attack

submarine] force levels is a substantial deviation from the BRAC criteria that undermine the recommendation to close Naval Submarine Base New London," they told Principi.

The independent panel, which has visited Groton as part of its review, will make its recommendations to President Bush and Congress in September. "As the information comes in we are reviewing it and finding the supporting documents," said Robert McCreary, a commission spokesman.

Clark's July 18 letter was the latest example of the rift between the civilian leadership of the Pentagon and at least some members of the uniformed military over the base closure plan. For example, the state adjutants general from the Air National Guard are scheduled to meet with the BRAC commission today over their opposition to the Pentagon's recommendations to ground more than two dozen Air Guard units around the country, including the 102d Fighter Wing at Otis Air Guard Base on Cape Cod.

### *Opinions/ Editorials*

#### **Fast pursuit; If Virginia loses Navy jet squadrons that may be relocated, North Carolina could hit an economic jackpot. Let the chase begin**

The News & Observer (Raleigh, NC)  
July 22, 2005

North Carolina is a logical place to consider for a new base to replace Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, if a decision is made to close the large Virginia facility. Governor Easley, along with other state and local leaders and the state's delegation in Congress, will want to move quickly to position the state to take advantage of any shifting of Oceana's assets.

The military already is a large and welcome industry in North Carolina, and the state wisely has courted the Pentagon in recent years as the federal government has gone through the complicated process of realigning the nation's lineup of bases for greater efficiency. Geographically and politically, North Carolina now is well-positioned to be a candidate for

Oceana's squadrons of F-14 fighter jets and eventually F/A-18 Super Hornets and F-35s.

The Navy's mission at Oceana is being squeezed by unbridled civilian development around the base. Residents of those new homes and businesses complain about jet noise. The Pentagon initially didn't target Oceana for possible closure, but questions about its usability have led the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission to add it to its list for possible changes. Meanwhile many residents of eastern North Carolina -- which has been hard hit by the loss of family farms and the decline of traditional industries, including tobacco -- would welcome a new base and the huge economic boost it would bring.

It's also possible that the Navy could save money and gain some efficiencies if it moved Oceana's operations to one of North Carolina's existing bases, such as the Marine Corps' Cherry Point air station near Havelock. North Carolina would be better suited than states farther south as Oceana's replacement because it is more centrally located on the East Coast and because it is closer to Norfolk, home port of the Navy's Atlantic fleet. Both are important national security considerations.

In the meantime, Oceana's potential closure should prompt the Navy to throttle back on plans to build a new practice landing field, commonly called an outlying landing field, in Washington and Beaufort counties. (The current practice field near Virginia Beach contributes to noise problems and also is troubled by light pollution that affects night operations.)

As proposed, the new field would be just five miles from Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, home to thousands of large migratory waterfowl whose movements could endanger pilots and birds alike. On Wednesday, a federal judge hearing the Navy's appeal of a lower court decision halting work on the field asked the obvious: "A layman looking at this might say, 'There really might be a danger of collisions, and given the size of the birds, they could be serious.'...Why isn't there a danger?"

There's no good answer to that, and the Navy's lawyer simply responded that the military would minimize risks by developing a plan to avoid the birds and by planting crops that don't attract them. Not much of a confidence-builder there, and it helps make the opponents' point that the Navy railroaded its plans without adequate study of the dangers.

The Navy's lawyer is right that it's impossible to reduce to zero the risk of accidents, but why pick a fight with nature? It will take years to build a new landing field in any event. The Navy probably could relocate Oceana to eastern North Carolina and find a better site for the landing field, all in one tight pass.

### **Senator, Let's Launch**

Richmond Times Dispatch (Richmond, VA)  
July 22, 2005

Naval Air Station Oceana, in Virginia Beach, is a key link in America's national security chain. It also is crucial to Virginia.

By a 7-1 vote, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) has belatedly added Oceana to its list of bases to realign or close -- a list first released in May. Oceana failed to make the May list evidently because the Pentagon or BRAC wants to build a "master" tactical jet aircraft base not subject to future encroachment by civilian development.

Word out of BRAC suggests the commission's thinking is this: (1) Begin closing Oceana soon; (2) move its Navy Hornets, Super Hornets, and aging Tomcats to Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta, Georgia; and (3) build a master base at some unknown location, perhaps in North Carolina -- and keep the Navy's jets at Moody (which also faces encroachment issues) until the master base's completion.

And do all that because of some noise complaints from those living near Oceana in Virginia Beach.

This strikes us as close to lunacy.

Noise is a factor regarding tactical jet operations -- always has been, always will be. That said, it is worth asking how many of the noise complainants moved into their residences without knowledge of Oceana's proximity.

If the Pentagon or the BRAC commissioners want a master jet base, that's fine. Get on with buying the land and building the base; let everyone know what's going on. Keep tactical air at Oceana until then, and allow the Navy and Virginia Beach and everyone with any direct or collateral interest in Oceana qua Oceana to begin preparing for the phase-out.

But for Heaven's sake, do not move Navy jets from the Navy's principal fleet to an Air Force base in the middle of southern Georgia -- against the day when there may be a master jet base somewhere else.

It makes no sense -- for the nation's security, for the Navy, for Virginia Beach and all of Hampton Roads.

If an occasion ever called for Virginia's Senator John Warner to take the lead, this is it. He wrote the BRAC enabling legislation. He is head of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a former Secretary of the Navy. He is one of the Senate's most distinguished members. If he cannot persuade the Pentagon or BRAC to remove Oceana from the closure list within the next month, no one can.

Senator, it's time for a BZ (Bravo Zulu -- Navy air lingo for outstanding) performance. Let's launch.

### **Additional Notes**