

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

September 13, 2005

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### **Rumsfeld Touts Base-Closing Savings**

USA Today  
September 13, 2005

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Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has advised President Bush that a plan presented to the White House last week for closing 22 major military bases and realigning 33 others will still yield large savings, even though fewer bases would be closed than Rumsfeld wanted, his spokesman said. Lawrence Di Rita would not say whether Rumsfeld recommended that Bush accept the plan as presented by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

[Base closings to save billions](#)

The commission said its recommendations will result in annual savings of \$4.2 billion, compared with \$5.4 billion under the plan it received last May from Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld had recommended closing 33 major bases and realigning 29 others.

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[Leaders Map Out Ideas For Historic Fort Monroe \(Norfolk, VA\)](#)

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[Base closing commission spares Mass. air base \(Boston, MA\)](#)

Bush has until Sept. 23 to accept the report and forward it to Congress or return it to the commission for more work. If sent to Congress, lawmakers can accept or reject the plan, but can't change it.

### Opinions/Editorials

N/A

**Southern Bases Look To Redevelop  
Now that the base-closing panel has given its  
list, communities focus on what to do next.**

Newport News Daily Press  
September 11, 2005

WASHINGTON -- A commission sent President Bush a military realignment proposal Friday that was less kind to Southern bases than the Pentagon wanted, and affected communities in the region were moving ahead with redevelopment plans even as their lawmakers hoped for last-minute changes.

The independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission ultimately approved all but 14 percent of the closings and consolidations sought by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. Many of the rollbacks came as bad news for the South, but few decisions to salvage bases or major missions benefited the region.

"The commissioners seemed to feel that the Pentagon had been too hard on the Northeast, and it was their job to rebalance the decisions in order to prevent the demilitarization of New England," said Loren Thompson, a defense analyst at the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington.

Thompson said he expected Bush and Congress to approve the commission's recommendations. Still, Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., was holding out hope that something could be done to restore the Pentagon's initial proposal to close Navy bases in Connecticut and Maine. Those would have meant major job gains at Kings Bay Submarine Station in Georgia and at Naval Station Norfolk.

The closing panel reversed those decisions, but Chambliss suggested Bush should rethink them because they accounted for 80 percent of the Navy's cost savings.

The commission's final deliberations were particularly bad news for Georgia, which not only failed to gain jobs at Kings Bay but lost four bases to closure -- Naval Air Station Atlanta, Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson in the

Atlanta area, and a small Navy supply school in Athens.

Under the redevelopment process, federal and state agencies get first dibs on former military property before it is turned over to the community for private development. Southern bases are often passed over because they are in less-populated areas, with a smaller available work force, but Atlanta is a major exception.

Some agencies have already expressed interest in maintaining a presence at Gillem or McPherson, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which currently houses trailers there, said Fred Bryant, executive director for the McPherson-Gillem Foundation.

Gen. Philip Y. Browning, executive director of the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee, which shepherded Georgia through the closure process, said the community may actually prefer private development because of property taxes, which would be waived if the government retains the property.

"Our problem may be we've got too many people interested" in the base properties, he said.

In late October, community leaders from the Southern bases targeted for closure or realignment will gather in Atlanta for a briefing by Pentagon officials for how to redevelop their bases.

One classic success story is found nearby. Fort McClellan in Alabama was shut in the last closure round, in 1995, but has re-emerged as the Center for Domestic Preparedness -- the pre-eminent training hub for first responders to terrorist attacks.

Alabama was relatively unscathed during the closure process this time, but the BRAC panel did reverse what would have been some major job gains for the Anniston Army Depot and Fort Rucker.

Less lucky in the South was Virginia's Fort Monroe, now targeted for closure. It dates to the 1800s and is the headquarters for the Army's

Training and Doctrine Command. Its redevelopment prospects are unclear.

Kentucky's Fort Knox will survive at the expense of its famous armor school, which is moving to Fort Benning in Georgia. In exchange, the post will hold the newly consolidated Army Human Resources Command and a new active combat unit. While losing its temporary student population, the post will gain about 4,800 permanent personnel.

Thompson said communities sometimes benefit more from closing a base than from simply gutting it by removing key missions.

"The problem that communities losing jobs face is that they're not going to have immediate access to the bases," Thompson said. "They have workers leaving, which has an economic impact, and nothing really being created in their place that would keep the economy intact."

### **Congressmen ask Bush to reconsider base closings in light of Katrina**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
September 12, 2005

U.S. Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi and U.S. Rep. Solomon Ortiz of Texas are asking President Bush to keep open two Naval stations on the Gulf Coast that had been targeted for closure, citing the need for such facilities to respond to catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission recently voted to shutdown Naval Station Pascagoula and Naval Station Ingleside.

Lott, R-Miss., and Ortiz, D-Texas, wrote Bush a letter last week saying the United States "must improve our federal homeland defense emergency response capability, particularly for the Gulf Coast region."

The request comes at a time when many officials and members of Congress are being highly critical of the response to the hurricane.

Lott said that removing all ships home-ported in the gulf and stripping the region of its only operational helicopter squadron would have slowed relief efforts even more. He said personnel from the base in his hometown of Pascagoula, a city hit hard by the storm, were some of the first responders on the scene.

"The relocation of these assets to the east and west coast would mean that our response to this crisis would be even more hampered by the four-day steam from Norfolk, Va., to the Gulf of Mexico," he said.

Pascagoula would lose 963 military personnel and support workers if Bush signs off on the BRAC plan. The base opened in 1992 and is now home to five ships. Ingleside is home of the Navy's mine warfare training center. The Pentagon estimates the closing could cost more than 6,000 jobs there.

Lott said that if Bush did not intervene and the bases are closed, an alternative could be to create multi-agency homeland security facilities in the Mississippi and Texas locations.

"Our states are leading the way to support the victims of this disaster and will again if required in the future," Lott and Ortiz wrote. "However, we feel a responsibility to highlight pending decisions, which if implemented, would only further degrade the security of the Gulf Coast and our national energy production and distribution system."

### **DoD Revitalization Plan Prompts Fear Of BRAC Cleanup Fights**

Inside the Army  
Suzanne Yohannan  
September 12, 2005

A proposed Defense Department rule for revitalizing bases slated for closure in the latest base realignment and closure round could prompt new disputes over land transfers and cleanup, according to redevelopment and local government sources, who say DOD's proposal goes too far in seeking to maximize property

sales and lacks policy on how the cleanup process will be applied at these bases.

The proposed regulation, which DOD quietly promulgated shortly before the Base Closure and Realignment Commission issued recommendations on which bases to close, states as DOD policy a goal of quick closures in order to facilitate community reuse of properties, full use of an array of legal authorities to transfer property, reliance on market forces in property conveyances and collaboration with communities on closure and redevelopment.

The proposed rule, which appeared in the Federal Register Aug. 9, is intended to revise DOD's process for revitalizing closed bases consistent with changes to BRAC law since the last round of closures in 1995. The proposal is open for comment through Oct. 11.

BRAC law allows DOD to convey properties -- known as economic development conveyances (EDCs) -- to local redevelopment authorities (LRAs) as a way to create new jobs to address the economic impacts of closures and realignment.

However, DOD has said that it would seek to sell more properties to private developers at fair market value under the 2005 BRAC round. DOD's limited use of this in the past has helped raise revenue that helps offset cleanup costs.

But state regulators are already questioning Army plans to quickly transfer properties to private parties who will conduct the cleanup at these sites, saying the Army's plan to dispose of its properties in four years would increase the workload and put pressure on officials to cut corners when characterizing environmental contamination.

Consistent with DOD's past statements, the Aug. 9 proposal calls for greater consideration of obtaining fair-market value for closed properties, rather than no- or low-cost conveyances to local redevelopment authorities (LRAs).

The rule "recognizes the duty of the [defense] secretary to seek to obtain fair market value for EDCs." It includes new language on the consideration of EDCs, recognizing "the statutory preference for obtaining fair market value with the alternative of a no-cost EDC," the rule says.

The rule still allows for no-cost EDCs to LRAs, but the test for obtaining such approvals is much more stringent than in past rounds, according to a DOD source. This is an attempt by Congress to ensure that if the land has value, that value is returned to the taxpayer and used to offset the cost of BRAC, the source says. The military now has some protection from "quick flips" of property where LRAs reaped the economic benefits of quickly marketing a piece of property, the source says.

However, the Association of Defense Communities (ADC), a group that represents community development entities, private sector companies and local, state and federal governments, is criticizing the rule's interpretation of revisions to BRAC law on property conveyances.

An ADC official says amendments to the law contained in the defense authorization bill for fiscal year 2002 do not preclude DOD from accepting less than fair-market value for properties under certain circumstances. Seeking fair-market value should not override the goal of achieving economic recovery of the community, the source says.

While local reuse developers understand DOD's desire for obtaining a return on its investment, they want DOD to respect communities' desire for economic recovery, the source says. If the two of those are out of balance, "then I think there will be lots of disagreements," the source says.

On environmental issues, the proposal updates the current BRAC rule in four areas, adding measures that sources say appear to be largely procedural. These include ensuring that cleanups involve the DOD Explosives Safety Board if contamination contains potentially explosive

materials and clarifying which military entity will govern environmental impact analyses at a base transferring from one military service to another.

The proposal also states the DOD Office of General Counsel is responsible for signing off on deeds and property sale documents that cite DOD's indemnification of property transferees for contamination left on the property by the military, and it provides guidance on historic preservation easements related to property disposal.

But some local government representatives say the proposal does not go far enough in addressing concerns about cleanups. "My hope was DOD would articulate a policy in which they'd closely work with communities and clean up consistent with local plans for property reuse, says an official with the National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals. But the rule does not address that issue. The source says he hoped this would be outlined in regulation -- which is binding -- rather than in policy guidance. A big question not addressed in the rule is who will determine the level of cleanup for a closing base, he says.

DOD may have averted some BRAC cleanup disputes due to the commission's Aug. 24 vote to keep several bases facing costly cleanups off the recommended list of closures. The commission voted to reject DOD plans to close Submarine Base New London, CT, Hawthorne Army Depot, NV, and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, ME, generally citing DOD's failure to consider the military value of the facilities.

In each of these cases, DOD officials have faced criticisms from the BRAC commissioners or opponents of closure that their cleanup cost estimates may be too low.

For example, in the case of the New London base, state officials questioned DOD estimates that the remaining cleanup could cost \$24 million, saying DOD underestimated cleanup costs by \$100 million. And DOD estimated

Hawthorne's cleanup at \$383 million -- the highest among all proposed closures.

But disagreements over cleanup levels could arise at some bases left on the closure list. The commission voted to close Ft. Monroe, VA, where Virginia officials have disputed DOD's cleanup estimate of \$300 million, saying the cost could exceed \$1 billion. There is no doubt there will be a "major disconnect" between what Virginia thinks is clean at the site and what the military is willing to do, says one private sector source with BRAC cleanup expertise.

The president has said he will approve the commission's list, after which Congress will hold an up or down vote on whether to go forward with the recommendations.

Military ranges contaminated with unexploded ordnance and ammunition depots on the BRAC list are likely to present the greatest cleanup challenges and costs for the military, observers say.

### **Base closings to save billions**

UPI

September 12, 2005

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has told President Bush the closing of 22 major military installations and realigning others would save billions of dollars.

Pentagon Spokesman Lawrence DiRita said a report on recommendations for the closing of the bases and the realigning of 33 others was given to the president Friday.

If the closures and realignments were approved, they would result in the long run in a savings of \$4.2 billion annually.

Bush must either accept the proposals and send them to Congress for action, or reject them and ask for new recommendations, by Sept. 23.

Plans to close or realign bases in the United States, part of the Pentagon's plan for a leaner, more flexible military force, faces stiff

opposition on Capitol Hill as lawmakers feel pressures from constituents to keep installations open that employ tens of thousands of civilians.

**Senators ask Bush to rethink base plan  
Hurricane demonstrated need for Gulf Coast  
Naval stations, officials write**

Jackson Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, MS)  
Ana Radelat  
September 13, 2005

Sen. Trent Lott on Monday asked President Bush to take Pascagoula Naval Station off the base-closure list, saying Hurricane Katrina's destruction of the Gulf Coast showed it is needed for relief and homeland security purposes.

"In view of the difficulties demonstrated by our current response plans, we must move quickly to improve our ability to rapidly and effectively deploy coordinated Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense assets to the Gulf Coast," Lott wrote.

On Sept. 9, the Base Realignment and Closure commission submitted a final list of shutdowns to Bush that contained the Pascagoula Naval Station and the Naval Air Station Corpus Christi among dozens of recommendations. Lott and Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Texas, argued that deployment of Navy ships from East Coast bases took several days to reach the area hit by Katrina. Removal of the ships from Pascagoula and Corpus Christi "would only further degrade the security of the Gulf Coast and our national energy production and distribution system," Lott and Ortiz wrote.

They asked Bush to request a change in the BRAC commission's report.

"Given our strategic vulnerability in this region, we request you closely review the (BRAC) commission recommendation to close the only two naval bases in the region and remove all ships, as well as the only operational helicopter squadron, from the Gulf Coast," they wrote.

Bush has until Sept. 23 to either accept the BRAC commission's report and forward it to Congress or return it to the commission for further work.

Forty-five days after Bush sends the report to Congress, it will become final unless Congress votes to reject the list in full.

The BRAC commission also had voted to remove all of the airplanes from the 186th Air Refueling Wing in Meridian.

But it disagreed with the Pentagon that a hospital at Keesler Air Force Base should be turned into an outpatient clinic.

It also saved a human resources center at the Stennis Space Center from shutdown.

All of Mississippi's Gulf Coast military facilities have been damaged by the storm, some worse than others.

The damage to Keesler Air Force Base, for example, is estimated to be \$500,000.

Brian Martin, policy director for 4th District Rep. Gene Taylor, said base housing was damaged and Keesler's hospital was flooded by Katrina, with medicines and equipment lost.

"They actually did a Caesarean section by flashlight there," Martin said.

**Lawmakers ask Bush to save Gulf Coast  
naval bases**

The Washington Post  
September 12, 2005

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Congressmen from Mississippi and Texas asked President George W. Bush on Monday to seek the reversal of proposed closures for two Gulf Coast naval bases, saying the closures would further delay disaster response in the region.

In a letter, Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott, a Republican, and Texas Rep. Solomon Ortiz, a Democrat, asked Bush to demand that the

Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) reconsider its recommendation to close the Pascagoula Naval Station in Mississippi and the Ingleside Naval Station at Corpus Christi, Texas.

The two bases were among hundreds that the commission recommended for closure or cutbacks in a report submitted to Bush last week for the first round of domestic base closings in a decade.

Bush can ask the commission once to make revisions. After that he can reject the list outright or send it on to Congress, which can accept or reject it but can make no changes.

Lott, who lost a home in Pascagoula to Hurricane Katrina, and Ortiz said the closures would worsen a "strategic vulnerability" by eliminating a Navy fleet presence from the region.

"We believe the DOD/BRAC Commission recommendations contain perhaps an unintended consequence, because post-BRAC, every single surface ship will disappear in the Gulf Coast," they wrote.

They argued that the deployment of Navy ships from East Coast bases took several days to reach the area hit by Katrina. Removal of the ships from Pascagoula and Corpus Christi "would only further degrade the security of the Gulf Coast and our national energy production and distribution system."

Several other Navy facilities in the region were not on the closure list, including the New Orleans Naval Air Station and the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Politicians in Massachusetts on Monday praised the wording of the final base closing commission report, which recommended "realignment" of the Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod instead of full closure.

Although the commission still recommended the move of F-15 fighter jets elsewhere, it left units based at Otis at their full personnel strength -- a strategy it employed with other Air Guard cutbacks.

"Otis has a new lease on life," said Sen. Edward Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat. "The revised report means the base will continue, but with new missions that will give it a strong future role in protecting the security of the Commonwealth and the region."

The commission had faced legal challenges to Air National Guard cutbacks from several state governors who argued that federal law required their consent for such moves. Most of these were rejected by appeals courts or the Supreme Court on the grounds that the cutback decisions are not yet final.

### **BRAC Decision Might Bring Sub Push**

Congress Daily

Megan Scully

September 13, 2005

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission's decision to reject Pentagon recommendations to shutter two Navy installations specializing in submarines might give shipbuilding supporters additional ammunition to argue for bigger budgets for underwater programs.

In its 337-page report sent Thursday to President Bush, the commission cites security concerns and uncertain future threats as the primary reasons for keeping open the New London Submarine Base in Connecticut and Maine's Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

For New London, in particular, the commission "found serious doubts about the threat assessment and resultant Force Structure plan basis for the number of required fast attack submarines," the report stated.

Because of the uncertain threats, presumably including China's burgeoning naval fleet, the Navy's own submarine requirements are up in

the air, making it "an unacceptable security risk" to shut down one of three sub bases on the East Coast, the commission concluded.

"There is a sort of opening here we need to take advantage of," a spokesman for Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., said Monday.

Simmons, a member of both the House Armed Services Committee and the months-old shipbuilding caucus, was one of the leading advocates for saving New London, which is in his district. General Dynamics' Electric Boat submarine outfit also is in the eastern Connecticut district.

The debate hinges primarily on how many submarines the Navy needs to maintain, and how many new subs it must build every year. Navy officials have said the fleet could dwindle to less than 40 attack submarines, though Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Mullen is reviewing that figure as part of a broader shipbuilding study.

"Submarine supporters can point to [the report] and say, 'See, the commission seems to support us ... because they're referring to this uncertainty,'" said a congressional source who follows defense issues.

One defense expert argued, however, that the commission's report likely will have little sway, compared with the forthcoming study from Mullen's office.

"The CNO has said that he is going to try to come up with a shipbuilding plan and part of that shipbuilding plan will be a revised submarine force structure study," said Robert Work, a senior analyst at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "If the number is above 40 [submarines], then we must shift to [building] two subs a year and the indication is that it is above 40."

Current plans call for the Navy to buy one new submarine annually, with each expected to stay in service for more than three decades.

Also under question is whether the commission -- set up exclusively to determine

the military's excess infrastructure -- overstepped its bounds when it doubted the Pentagon's force structure plans in making the New London decision.

"They openly expressed doubt of force structure. That diminishes the respectability of the commission," said a congressional source familiar with base closures. "For them to have larger concerns ... is not in their charter."

Paul Hirsch, a base-closure consultant who was a senior staffer on the 1991 commission, disagreed, noting that it is within the commission's purview to keep open installations it feels the military will need down the road.

"I don't know if the commission was questioning the force-structure plan. They were questioning the idea that if we get rid of some of this capacity, given what it is, we are not going to be able to get it back," Hirsch said. "That is within their responsibility to do."

### Local News Articles

#### **Leaders Map Out Ideas For Historic Fort Monroe**

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)  
Louis Hansen  
September 13, 2005

HAMPTON — Acknowledging the looming end to military operations at historic Fort Monroe, Hampton leaders on Monday sketched out steps to transform the Army installation to civilian use.

Their proposal lays out the process for completing a new master plan for the base within 15 months and jump-starting redevelopment of the moat-surrounded fort.

"We're ready to hit the deck and get going," said Hampton City Councilman Charles Sapp.

The federal Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted unanimously last month to close the 180-year-old base. If

approved by President Bush and Congress, military operations will cease within six years.

Hampton leaders called for public hearings to solicit the hopes and concerns about redeveloping the waterfront base. The city will also take suggestions through a phone line, (757) 727-8311, and Web site, [www.hampton.gov/fort\\_monroe](http://www.hampton.gov/fort_monroe).

Mayor Ross A. Kearney II on Monday endorsed a mixed development, which would be open to the public, combine commercial and residential communities, and preserve the fort's storied history.

Kearney said the city should move quickly on a master plan to allow the Army to start cleaning up the site. The installation served as an artillery training hub for generations of soldiers and is littered with unexploded ordnance.

The commission also anticipated large clean-up costs for the long time hub of Army artillery training. Estimates range from \$200 million to more than \$1 billion to return the site to pristine condition.

Kearney said the city would be unable to maintain Fort Monroe's landmarks alone, which could cost as much as \$14 million annually.

The city will hold a public hearing Oct. 10 at Kecoughtan High School and a follow-up session in December. The City Council wants to review a draft plan with the governor in March; the state will probably retain ownership of the property after the military leaves.

The council and the local Federal Areas Development Authority will appoint a planning committee to oversee the process. The city hopes to have a final master plan approved by the governor by the end of 2006. It also expects state and federal grants to cover some of the planning costs.

"This is going to be an open process," Kearney said.

Military planners expect to save \$686 million over 20 years by closing the base. Closing Fort Monroe means the loss of 3,500 military and civilian jobs from the base, although some commands will be relocated to nearby Fort Eustis.

### **Beyond the moment**

Beaver County Times (Beaver County, CA)  
September 12, 2005

Initially, we all can rejoice in the apparent preservation of the 911th Air Force Reserve station in Moon Township.

The 911th was on the Base Realignment and Closure Committee's list for closure, but apparently political wrangling succeeded in protecting it. In a bipartisan effort and a nod to testy re-election campaigns for U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum of Pittsburgh and U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy of Upper St. Clair, both Republican, and Democrat Gov. Ed Rendell, the base was spared. At least for now.

The effort has saved about 2,000 jobs, directly and indirectly attached to the base, the leaders said.

For now, the base's main mission has been to fly the cavernous C-130s, ferrying supplies and troops as needed. But the realignment plans initially called for the planes to be moved elsewhere - and for a station that had operated technical and logistical missions with pilots and crews to be converted into a station that worked with the biomedical/anti-terrorism groups in Pittsburgh, drawing on the region's medical strengths.

Since then, political pressure has kept the planes at the 911th. Seemingly, the 911th's mission sticks to the original BRAC plan of collaborating with the Pittsburgh-area medical centers and anti-terrorism units. While other bases on the closure list presented plans to morph to another mission, Pittsburgh was the only one that succeeded. Exactly how the planes fit into the plan, no one is sure.

For now, we'll settle, but the respite is no panacea.

The language in the proposal and the new mission are so vague that the future of the base and its crew looks anything but firmly anchored in place.

The federal budget still determines what the base does or doesn't have, so the political guns and BRAC Task Force can't rest yet.

The crew members and the communities supporting them need to know more specifics about the 911th's role in homeland security, for the benefit of themselves and their country.

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### **Base closing commission spares Mass. air base**

The Associated Press (Boston, MA)  
Glen Johnson  
September 13, 2005

State officials announced Monday that a National Guard air base on Cape Cod will not be closed by the government as originally thought.

Otis Air National Guard Base "has a new lease on life," said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who had fought the targeting of the installation by the federal base closing commission.

Officials said the base will retain most of its 500 jobs, although some positions will be moved across the state when an 18-plane wing of F-15 fighter jets is relocated to Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield. Barnes is still slated to lose a wing of A-10 attack aircraft.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted Aug. 26 to close Otis, along with hundreds of other military installations nationwide.

Last week, state officials filed suit week challenging the commission's vote. They argued that Guard units could not be reconfigured without prior approval of a governor, who serves as commander in chief of the units.

Over the weekend, attorneys for the governor and attorney general's offices analyzed the commission's formal recommendations on the base closings that had been forwarded to President Bush last Thursday.

They detected that the commission had changed its recommendation on Otis from "closure" to "realignment."

State officials said Monday they believed the commission's reversal came as a result of the suit.

But a commission spokesman said the change was actually made later at the Aug. 26 session - with no notice given to the governor, the state's two U.S. senators, its congressional delegation or the news media.

The state also filed a federal lawsuit to block the closure - but the commission never corrected the state's understanding of the decision, spokesman Robert McCreary maintained.

Both Gov. Mitt Romney's communications director, Eric Fehrstrom and aides to Kennedy and Attorney General Tom Reilly disputed McCreary's explanation.

They said conversations they had with the base closing staff during the week after the commission meeting confirmed that the board had voted to close the base.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

### **Additional Notes**