

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

September 14, 2005

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**BRAC List Gives GOP Ideas Of Where To Site Refineries**

Congress Daily

Darren Goode

September 13, 2005

The oil industry is reacting cautiously to a GOP proposal to use the soon-to-be expanded list of shuttered military bases as sites for petroleum refineries. Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Inhofe has expressed interest in the idea as part of an effort to repair Hurricane Katrina's damage to the energy infrastructure. The opportunities are about to expand with the military closure list that the Base Closure and Realignment Commission staff sent President Bush this month. Others say the BRAC list might offer vast tracts of vacant land but no obvious areas to site a refinery. "I don't see a list here that would make sense to me," said Barry Rhodes, a D.C.-based BRAC lobbyist.

When eyeing a site, oil companies consider size, proximity to markets, water supplies and raw materials, including crude oil, said National Petrochemical and Refiners Association President Bob Slaughter. Military bases generally are "not necessarily set up to be convenient as far as getting the crude and shipping out refinery product," one energy lobbyist said. Many bases are in less populated

areas and on land that would not be useful to anyone other than the military, the lobbyist said. There also are competing ideas for what to do with the closed bases. "So the truth is we're not going to know for a while" whether any closed bases could be used as a refinery location, Slaughter said.

"It's not that we're not interested ... it's just that the logistics of where you site military bases is a different rationale than where you site refineries," said Ed Murphy, an official with the American Petroleum Institute. Exceptions are Navy shipyards, two of which are on the BRAC list: one in Pascagoula, Miss., and another near Corpus Christi, Texas. However, lawmakers from those areas argue that they should remain open to help the economy of those areas struggling after the hurricane. Bush has until next Friday to send the BRAC list back to the commission with suggestions. If he sends it directly to Congress, he must submit the BRAC Commission version in its entirety. The only step open to Congress is to pass a joint resolution disapproving the list.

### **Defense Authorization Likely Delayed Because of BRAC Recommendations**

CQ Today – Defense

John M. Donnelly

September 13, 2005

The fiscal 2006 defense authorization bill probably will not come to the Senate floor until after President Bush acts on military base-closures later this month, a senior Republican lawmaker said Tuesday.

But even if Bush moves on the base closure issue, the bill still faces major hurdles because of proposed amendments dealing with the treatment of detainees in U.S. military prisons that his administration opposes.

The Senate took up the bill (S 1042; S Rept 109-69), which authorizes \$491.6 billion for the Defense and Energy departments for fiscal 2006, in late July and then shelved it a few days later because of deep differences over the base closings and detainee treatment issues.

Republican Sen. John W. Warner of Virginia, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said Tuesday that he has suggested to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., that the bill should return to the floor only after Bush decides whether to send Congress the list of bases that were recommended for closure by the Base Realignment and Closure commission (BRAC) last month, or return the list to the commission for revisions. Bush has until Sept. 23 to make his decision.

Warner said he was delaying consideration of the authorization bill because he needed the support of sponsors of an amendment that would delay the base closures.

"They want to see what the president does or does not do," Warner said.

But the most divisive issue hanging over the authorization bill appeared to be proposals to regulate U.S. military treatment of detainees. Senior lawmakers said Tuesday that those amendments were what prompted Frist to pull the bill from the floor in July. The administration has threatened to veto the bill if it contains amendments stipulating how the president should treat detainees.

Republican John McCain of Arizona — author of one amendment that would bar the use of torture and another that would extend Geneva Convention protections to enemy combatants — said it was "common knowledge" that the administration's opposition to the detainee debate has kept Frist from allowing a debate on the defense authorization measure.

McCain has the support of Warner and Republican Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, along with Senate Democrats. "To say that we're not going to do the right thing for our troops by taking up an authorization bill because they don't want to face an amendment . . . is a real abdication of our responsibility to our troops," said Carl Levin of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services panel.

Most Republicans are expected to oppose the detainee amendments. "The allegations of prisoner abuse have been exaggerated beyond all reality," said Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, a member of the Armed Services Committee.

But Sessions acknowledged he may be fighting a losing battle. "When you've got a few Republicans out there leading the charge, and all the Democrats jump on board, then they've got the votes," he said.

#### Support Waning

Meanwhile, as Warner linked the timing of Senate consideration of the authorization bill to the BRAC process, support for the amendment delaying BRAC has waned, according to supporters of the amendment.

"The people who were most active on the issue are less inclined to be active on the issue going forward," said South Dakota Republican John Thune, who sponsored the amendment. Thune and his South Dakota colleagues convinced the BRAC panel to reject a Pentagon proposal to close Ellsworth Air Force Base in their state.

But some senators whose bases are recommended for closure remain strongly opposed to the closure process. Republican Trent Lott, whose home state of Mississippi would lose two facilities, said that he asked Bush to reject the recommended BRAC round during the president's recent visit to the state following Hurricane Katrina.

With no assurances from Bush, Lott vowed to continue his fight against BRAC "until hell freezes over." But he acknowledged he is not finding much support from other senators.

If Bush returns the base closure list to the commission, the panel would have until Oct. 20 to write a second, revised list and send it back to the president. Bush would then have until Nov. 7 either to approve those recommendations and send them to Congress, or to reject them and end the entire process. Most lawmakers regard that scenario as highly unlikely.

If Bush accepts the commission's plan, whether now or in November, it becomes law in 45 days unless Congress passes a joint resolution of disapproval.

#### Warner Sees Possible Katrina Impact On Troop And Base-Closure Decisions

Congress Daily  
Megan Scully  
September 14, 2005

If a consensus emerges that more U.S. troops are needed to handle both domestic emergencies and overseas deployments, it might cause the government to rethink the current list of base-closure recommendations now on the president's desk, Senate Armed Services Chairman Warner said Tuesday.

The independent base-closing commission made its final decisions just days before Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. But, as Warner acknowledged, the government now might need to review those recommendations in light of the hurricane and the deployment of 70,000 troops to the area.

"Situations like this sometimes dictate you re-examine the end strength of the Guard and Reserve to determine whether or not they are adequate," Warner said. "There is a relationship [there] on what our base structure is in this country."

Warner cautioned that he was not predicting what President Bush or Congress might do, nor was he providing any immediate recommendations for a particular path forward.

"Given the Katrina situation, it might require some rethinking," Warner said of the base-closing commission's recommendations.

He added later that he is "working with the department now because clearly we've got to look at the issues of end-strength of the regular forces and end-strength of the Guard, and that all involves all the way down to houses and base structure."

Warner declined to identify specific bases that might need to remain open to support any influx of troops.

His comments came as a handful of lawmakers from Gulf Coast states argued that two naval stations slated for closure in Texas and Mississippi should remain open to deal with emerging homeland security and defense missions in the region.

Personnel at Pascagoula and Ingleside Naval Stations were among the first responders to the hurricane, Mississippi Republican Sen. Trent Lott and others wrote in a letter sent this week to Bush. Closing the installations would delay military reaction to future crises in the area, they wrote.

Meanwhile, the Senate Armed Services Committee is awaiting action to continue on their \$441.6 billion defense authorization bill, which was pulled from the floor in late July.

Warner said he spoke briefly with Majority Leader Frist Tuesday and felt confident Senate leadership will place the bill on the legislative calendar. "Don't worry. As sure as I'm standing right here we're going to have that bill out," Warner said.

But Warner also has discussed with Frist whether they should hold off on debating defense authorization until the White House acts on the base-closure report.

Bush must decide by Sept. 23 whether to send the report back to the commission with suggestions for further review.

"It might be wise to wait out the president's decisions on the 23rd in the hopes that there would be some finality to the [base-closure] process," Warner said.

Senate Armed Services member John Thune, R-S.D., has introduced an amendment to the authorization bill to stall base-closures for several years -- until most troops return from

Iraq and the Pentagon completes several in-depth reviews.

Thune has been one of the leading base-closure opponents since the Pentagon recommended shuttering his state's Ellsworth Air Force Base.

The commission last month opted to overturn the recommendation, but Thune has said the reasoning behind his amendment still stands.

"He's getting encouragement from other members and there have been a few members who approached him that were not originally" among the co-sponsors, a Thune spokesman said.

Thune has not decided whether to move forward with the amendment.

Other top committee members criticized leadership for not yet scheduling debate on the bill and blamed the delay on the administration's aversion to an amendment offered by Airland Subcommittee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., that would standardize detainee interrogation policies.

"We've got really important provisions for our troops [who] are already overstretched," said Armed Services ranking member Carl Levin, D-Mich. "The leaders of the Senate have decided to leave it in limbo because the White House doesn't want to deal with the McCain amendment."

If the Senate does not consider the authorization bill, McCain and Levin said they plan to introduce the detainee amendment during debate on Defense appropriations.

Warner continues to support the McCain amendment and said he does not have "solid facts" that it was the reason the bill was pulled from the floor in July.

Rather, he said it was not moving fast enough and leadership wanted to push other bills before the August recess.

**Naval chief favors more subs**

The Associated Press  
John Christoffersen  
September 13, 2005

GROTON, Conn. -- The U.S. Navy's top uniformed officer said Tuesday he favors building more submarines, a move sought by Connecticut officials after the national base closure commission voted to keep the submarine base here open.

Adm. Michael Mullen, who was appointed chief of naval operations in July, said he doesn't believe production can be stepped up for about seven years.

"We need to go to two submarines a year," Mullen said after speaking to sailors at the base. "On the other hand, the cost of them has to come down."

The Navy builds one submarine a year or fewer. Electric Boat, which builds submarines in Groton, has said the Navy needs to increase production to two a year to keep pace with the old submarines that go out of service.

Mullen spoke just weeks after the Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted to remove the 137-year-old Submarine Base New London from its closure list.

While supporters of undersea warfare cheered the decision to keep the base open, the submarine fleet's future remains uncertain. Navy shipbuilding projections show it dwindling from 54 subs into the 30s.

Hundreds of sailors in blue work uniforms leaped to their feet as Mullen entered the room for his first address at the Connecticut base since he became chief.

Mullen told the submariners that the Navy is changing. He said he wants to increase diversity and step up the Navy's participation in joint operations with other military branches by putting more of his top officers in combat and command assignments.

The Navy is also sending more sailors on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said, noting that ground troops need relief. He said his biggest challenge is developing a Navy for the future.

"My message to you is it's difficult to predict what will happen next," Mullen said.

The Navy also is evaluating a new uniform and creating a more strictly enforced physical fitness test. Unlike the past, repeated failures will lead to discharge, Navy officials said.

Mullen also praised the work of sailors in responding to Hurricane Katrina. About 15,000 sailors and Navy civilians were affected the hurricane, he said.

**Local News Articles****Va. Senators Won't Ask Bush To Help Soften BRAC On Oceana Demands**

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)  
Dale Eisman  
September 14, 2005

WASHINGTON — Virginia's two U.S. senators have decided not to press the Bush administration for help in heading off demands that residential and commercial development be cleared from areas around Oceana Naval Air Station, they confirmed Tuesday.

In separate interviews, Sens. George F. Allen and John W. Warner, a pair of Republicans with close ties to the White House, said they have no plans to appeal directly to the president in Oceana's defense. The base's future now rests with local voters and officials rather than Bush or the Congress, Allen said .

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission wants Virginia and the city of Virginia Beach to implement a program to condemn and acquire property in high-risk areas near Oceana, the Navy's busiest air base.

Unless the state and city spend at least \$15 million annually to buy businesses and the

estimated 1,800 homes in the targeted areas, Oceana's 200-plus fighter jets will be shifted to Cecil Field, a former base near Jacksonville, Fla., the commission said in a report released on Friday. Authorities in Florida have offered to return the closed base to the Navy.

Sens. Warner and Allen, along with Gov. Mark R. Warner, were key figures in a pro-Oceana lobbying effort before the commission delivered its ultimatum. But they and local officials now seem focused on satisfying the commission's conditions.

"The White House isn't going to change any of this," Allen predicted Tuesday, citing "private conversations" with officials there.

Warner said he has not appealed directly to Bush to recommend changes in the commission plan. As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Warner is perhaps Congress' most influential voice on defense issues.

The base-closure law gives Bush until Sept. 23 to ask the commission to reconsider any of its proposals.

The president said last month that he would accept whatever the commission recommended, but Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has held out the possibility that he'll ask Bush to seek changes.

The nine commissioners have suggested closing 21 major bases and shuffling forces at dozens of others, moves that would save an estimated \$15 billion over 20 years.

Warner said he understands that Bush is likely to act quickly on the commission plan. If he recommends no changes, Congress will have to accept or reject the proposals as a package.

The BRAC law does not permit legislative tinkering with individual commission recommendations.

While neither Warner nor Allen has made a direct appeal to Bush concerning Oceana, lawmakers from states along the Gulf Coast are

urging the White House to intercede to save Navy bases in Texas and Mississippi because of their value in disaster relief efforts in that region.

In a letter to Bush, Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Texas, and Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., argue that Hurricane Katrina exposed the vulnerability of the Gulf Coast to a potential terrorist attack as well as to hurricanes.

With the proposed closures of Navy bases at Ingleside, Texas, and Pascagoula, Miss., the Navy would not have any ships stationed in the gulf region.

Sen. Warner said Tuesday that congressional uncertainty over the ultimate outcome of the closing process probably will force a delay in action on the 2006 defense budget.

A number of his colleagues do not want to vote on a new Pentagon budget until they're certain bases in their areas are no longer in jeopardy, he said.

### **Officials Now Say Otis Will Stay Open Panel's report to Bush calls for realignment**

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)  
Scott Helman and Matt Viser  
September 13, 2005

State leaders announced triumphantly yesterday that despite a Pentagon threat to close it, Otis Air National Guard Base will remain open. They cited a report sent to President Bush last week that recommends the base be realigned, not shut down.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted Aug. 26 to send the 102d Fighter Wing to Barnes Municipal Airport Air Guard Station in Westfield. That vote was widely interpreted by Massachusetts politicians and the media as an endorsement of the Pentagon decision to close Otis.

Yesterday, Governor Mitt Romney and Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly claimed victory, saying that a lawsuit they filed after the commission vote had helped pressure the panel

to back off its recommendation. But a spokesman for the Base Realignment and Closure Commission said there had been no change in the recommendation since the commission's Aug. 26 meeting.

The confusion was probably fueled in part by statements that BRAC members made as they considered Otis and dozens of other bases, according to transcripts reviewed yesterday the Globe.

Several commissioners, according to the transcripts, said publicly that they were voting to close Otis. Nowhere in the transcripts is it clear that the commission discussed realigning the base instead.

"I think this is the motion that closes Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts," Commissioner Samuel Skinner, said shortly before the vote, according to the transcript.

"It is," replied Admiral Harold W. Gehman Jr., another commissioner.

BRAC spokesman Robert McCreary said yesterday that there were other votes later in the day to clear up technicalities and that those votes did not show up in the transcripts.

"It is confusing," he said. "But the final report is the final report."

Asked why BRAC didn't correct the widespread assumption that Otis was being closed completely, McCreary said, "We don't have that large of a staff, and we had thousands of recommendations to go through. I didn't even know about this until recently."

Asked about McCreary's comments last night, Romney's communications director, Eric Fehrstrom, said that the administration believes that the commission voted to close Otis and that bipartisan pressure on BRAC provoked it to amend the final recommendation.

The indication that Otis would be kept open surfaced when aides to top state leaders began reviewing the final BRAC report, which was

sent to Bush Friday. Bush has until Sept. 23 to approve the recommendations or send them to Congress, which would have 45 days to reject the entire list or they become law.

Reilly held a press conference yesterday and said that his chief of staff, after poring through the report, saw that the commission was in fact calling for realignment, and not closure.

"What a difference a word makes," Reilly said. "The bottom line is Otis Air Force Base will remain open."

Romney said yesterday that the decision was the latest victory in the base-closing process for New England. Some of the region's major military installations were recommended by the Pentagon for closing, but the commission largely ignored that advice. The BRAC chose to spare Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., despite recommendations by the Department of Defense to close both. Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford and Natick Labs will also remain open.

Romney called the preservation of Otis "the icing on the cake."

"Otis has a new lease on life," Senator Edward Kennedy added in a statement. "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."

As part of the BRAC plan, the Guard's 253d Combat Communications Group and 267th Communications Squadron will remain at Otis, and the overall force level of the Massachusetts Air National Guard will remain the same. Also, according to state officials, Otis could grow at a later date if it gets a new mission, though it remains unclear exactly what that would be.

Melissa Wagoner, a spokeswoman for Kennedy, said state officials expect to meet with Air National Guard officials to determine the other uses of the base.

Romney has urged the US Department of Homeland Security to approve a plan to have Otis host an antiterrorism training center. At a meeting in April with Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, Romney presented a \$67 million plan for construction of an indoor warfare training complex, firing ranges, and classrooms on the base that would be used to help military, police, and fire departments prepare for a terrorist attack.

Romney, US Representative William D. Delahunt, and several other Massachusetts leaders expressed support for that idea yesterday, saying something like an antiterrorist training center would be a fitting new mission for Otis. Romney mentioned his conversation with Chertoff and said he would continue to push for it.

"The future missions for Otis are undefined at this point, but over the coming months and years -- we've got two years, with the Air National Guard, the governor's office, and the congressional delegation -- we'll be working to define that mission," Reilly said. "This is a good opportunity."

The state had also filed a federal lawsuit in an attempt to halt the closing of Otis, and it wasn't immediately clear whether state officials would now abandon that effort.

Some state officials said yesterday that the decision to keep Otis open would effectively preserve some 500 jobs there. But McCreary, the BRAC spokesman, challenged that number, saying that when the 102d fighter wing is transferred, those jobs will not be replaced

"They are going to lose jobs," McCreary said. "It's just how many. No one's done a count on that yet."

He said this scenario keeps the base "warm" and would allow the Pentagon to add more jobs to the base later. That is not part of the current plan, he said.

"We don't know how many personnel it would mean," McCreary said. "But the planes are gone."

Most recently, Otis has provided temporary housing for more than 200 evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who were flown to Massachusetts from the Gulf storm's damage area. Romney and others have cited the base's relief role as further evidence that Otis is a key resource.

Delahunt and state Senator Therese Murray, a Plymouth Democrat, both said yesterday that they would continue to push to have the 102d Fighter Wing returned to Otis. "I still think it makes no sense to transfer the 102d," Delahunt said.

### **Mega-base could gain 1,500 to 2,000 jobs, Saxton says;**

#### **He also said the proposed**

#### **McGuire/Dix/Lakehurst consolidation could yield 42 to 47 more aircraft.**

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)

Edward Colimore

September 13, 2005

U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton yesterday released an updated accounting of the additional aircraft and jobs expected to go to the proposed Joint Base McGuire/Dix/Lakehurst in Burlington and Ocean Counties.

According to Navy Reserve and Army Reserve estimates, 42 to 47 aircraft and 1,500 to 2,000 full-time and part-time jobs would go to the mega-base in the next several years under the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendations, Saxton said at a meeting of the Joint Task Force for Dix/McGuire in Mount Holly.

McGuire employs 11,800, Dix about 3,000 and Lakehurst 3,100. Lakehurst would lose 187 in the consolidation.

"We have clearly been fortunate in the BRAC process," said Saxton, a Republican member of the House Armed Services Committee whose

district includes Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base and included the Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station before redistricting in the 1990s.

"We appear to be heading out of BRAC with quite a few more aircraft and people than we had heading into it. If approved by the President and the Congress, this can only be viewed as an expansion of the missions to be conducted out of the new Joint Base in the future."

These aircraft would be added: four C-130 Herculeses, eight KC-135 Stratotankers (16 older versions are being retired), 11 light helicopters, four C-9 Skytrains, five to 10 C-12 Huron aircraft, and 10 CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters.

Saxton was optimistic that President Bush and Congress would approve the commission's recommendations. "We're pleased that the signals from Washington are positive," he said, adding that although "this round will be over two months from now, communities can never assume their bases are safe."

"Military value takes into account the efficiencies and inefficiencies in the basing structure."

Saxton said officials at the three bases may take about two years to combine their facilities into what he said would be the streamlined joint base of the future. "They have already been coming together for years" through joint projects, he said, adding that the changes will be a boon to the local economy.

### **Ellsworth looks toward future**

Senators working to 'BRAC-proof' base;  
Aberdeen American News (Aberdeen, SD)  
Mary Clare Jalonick  
September 14, 2005

WASHINGTON - South Dakota's congressional delegation is working to secure new missions for Ellsworth Air Force Base, hoping to save it from future base closing rounds.

The base, which houses B1-B bombers and is the state's second-largest employer, appears to have narrowly escaped closure in this year's round. The independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission took it off the Pentagon's list of recommendations last month.

"We want to do everything we can to make Ellsworth a multi-mission base to BRAC-proof it for future rounds," Republican Sen. John Thune said Tuesday.

The Republican senator said he has talked to several Air Force officials about possible new missions, including unmanned aerial vehicles, 747-style aircraft that use lasers to repel missiles or satellites, and weapons systems that could be launched into space.

Unmanned aerial vehicles, a rapidly growing Pentagon mission, already are scheduled for North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base. The Air Force decided to put UAVs at the base after initially planning to recommend its closure.

The unmanned aerial vehicles scheduled to go to Grand Forks are the Global Hawk, which can relay images and sensor information to battlefield commanders, and the Predator, a missile-firing craft that also can be used for reconnaissance and surveillance.

"I don't think there is anything to suggest you couldn't have that mission at Ellsworth as well," Thune said.

A spokeswoman for South Dakota's other senator, Democrat Tim Johnson, said the delegation started talking about a new mission the day of the decision.

"The final BRAC list, once fully approved, will also give us a better idea of what sort of missions are available for Ellsworth to pick up," said Julianne Fisher.

Fisher said Johnson, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, also will work to make sure that upgrades for the current fleet of B1-Bs are funded.

The BRAC commission issued a final draft to President Bush last week, and he is not expected to change it. Congress also is expected to approve the recommendations.

**Outside lawyers hired for bases help  
The law firm has experience with Department  
of Defense issues, governor's office says**  
Richmond Times Dispatch (Richmond, VA)  
Peter Hardin  
September 14, 2005

Virginia has turned to outside lawyers for advice in the wake of a base-closing commission's votes to shut or realign some military activities in the state.

The state on Monday secured the legal services of the Hunton & Williams law firm, a spokesman for Gov. Mark R. Warner said yesterday.

"We're keeping all of our options open," explained the spokesman, Kevin Hall, about Virginia responding to recent votes by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Warner made the decision to retain outside legal counsel in consultation with the state attorney general's office, Hall said. The governor wants to explore options "as we continue to process exactly what it is this BRAC commission is requiring us to do," he added.

The commission voted to relocate about 18,000 military and civilian defense workers from leased office space in Arlington County and Alexandria.

It voted to move the jet-base operations at Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach to Florida unless a series of steps are taken to stem suburban encroachment. The jet base has about 12,000 workers.

The commission also voted to close historic Fort Monroe in Hampton.

Warner has spoken publicly in favor of efforts to meet the commission's conditions at Oceana. He

and others defending Oceana have spoken of hopes to obtain a statement by the Navy about a longer-term commitment to Oceana as the site of Navy's East Coast pilot-training center.

The governor's spokesman said Hunton & Williams' Washington office has experience with Department of Defense issues that the attorney general's office in Virginia does not have.

U.S. Sen. John W. Warner, R-Va. and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has questioned whether BRAC may have overstepped its legal bounds. The senator, who is not related to the Democratic governor, helped write the nation's base-closure law.

Overall, Virginia officials estimate the state may see a net gain of as many as 3,000 jobs as a result of the BRAC decisions, if Congress and President Bush go along.

When the independent commission issued its final report last week, it provided different data. It said Virginia would lose 7,688 jobs. Virginia officials have questioned the BRAC calculations as flawed or incomplete.

### *Opinions/ Editorials*

#### **'We Did Not Flinch' Commission weighed defense and economic values in our decisions.**

USA Today  
Anthony Principi  
September 14, 2005

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission's deliberations and decisions are rooted in the eight statutory BRAC selection criteria and the Defense Department's force structure plan. The criteria give priority to military value but do include economic impact. We adhered to those priorities. Assertions to the contrary ignore the facts.

The Defense Department claimed \$47.8 billion in savings. However, exclusion of ephemeral "savings" for "eliminating" personnel at a

closing base, when those servicemembers would in fact continue to be paid at their new assignments, reduces the 20-year savings to only \$18.6 billion. On the same basis, the commission's recommendations would save \$15 billion.

Anthony Principi is chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

*Additional Notes*

The commission approved 86% of the Defense Department's 190 recommendations for closing or realigning bases, 119 with no change and 45 with amendments. The commission rejected only 13 recommendations in their entirety and significantly modified another 13. We made five additional recommendations on our own initiative.

As required by law, our assessment went beyond computing a balance sheet of savings and costs and focused on military value. In our deliberations, we weighed the strategic uncertainties over the 20-year threat assessment mandated by Congress as well as the Defense Department's ongoing transformation of military doctrine and structure.

In our view, nuclear shipyards and submarine bases are valuable and irreplaceable assets. Once torn down and their workers dispersed, they can never be reconstituted. No one disputes the high quality and cost effective work at Portsmouth shipyard and New London submarine base. The commission determined that keeping these facilities open and available would be a very inexpensive insurance policy against the unknown challenges of the next two decades while providing our Navy with invaluable flexibility and surge capacity. Once illusionary military personnel "savings" are discounted, keeping Ellsworth Air Force Base open actually saves the taxpayers money while providing the Air Force with valuable flexibility.

We did not flinch in approving recommendations with severe economic impacts when supported by the BRAC selection criteria, just as we did not flinch from disagreeing with the Defense Department when we determined a closure recommendation was not consistent with military value, BRAC selection criteria and the force structure plan.