

# Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

October 21, 2005

## Department of Defense Releases

N/A

## National News Articles

[Rep. Hastings Calls For Establishment of National Emergency Centers](#)

## Local News Articles

[Jacksonville mayor doesn't want jets \(Richmond, VA\)](#)

[Mayor Halts Effort to Attract Navy To Cecil Field \(Jacksonville, FL\)](#)

[BRAC Process Was a Roller Coaster \(New London, CT\)](#)

[Jacksonville Withdraws Effort To Lure Oceana Jets \(Norfolk, VA\)](#)

[Jacksonville Ends Push To Revive Closed Base \(Tampa, FL\)](#)

[Base not safe yet, analysts say \(Norfolk, VA\)](#)

[Florida halts efforts to return station to air base status \(New Bern, NC\)](#)

[Beach leaders, residents react cautiously to Cecil decision \(Norfolk, VA\)](#)

## Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

## Additional Notes

[PA Governor Rendell Tells Congressional Committee of National Guard's Importance: Federal Role in Equipping Guard](#)

## Department of Defense Releases

N/A

## National News Articles

**Rep. Hastings Calls For Establishment of National Emergency Centers**

US Fed News  
October 20, 2005

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings, D-Fla. (23rd CD), issued the following press release:

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL) today introduced legislation requiring the establishment of no less than six National Emergency Centers on closed military installations capable of providing temporary housing, medical, education, and humanitarian assistance to individuals and families displaced due to a national emergency. The Centers would also be used for disaster preparedness training and coordination exercises.

"Victims of Katrina and Rita are spread all over the country, costing the government \$11 million per day just to house only a portion of evacuees in hotels. Tens of thousands are still living in inadequate shelters and even tents - months after the storm - with little assurances for their safety and security," said Representative Hastings. "This problem, coupled with our need to

improve training and preparedness for national emergencies, must be addressed to ensure that the humanitarian catastrophe which began with Katrina and continues today will never occur again."

Under Representative Hastings' legislation, National Emergency Centers would be located on military bases with a preference wherever possible for those installations closed during the most recent Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) Commission recommendations. As a prerequisite of the legislation, selected military installations must already have the necessary infrastructure in place to house, feed, educate and care for evacuees over an extended period of time, thus limiting the cost and time needed to construct these facilities.

"Congress can either bulldoze the BRAC bases or it can actually do something positive with the infrastructure that's already in place," Representative Hastings stated. "The last thing we should do to a family of four who just lost their home in a hurricane is force them to live out of a suitcase in a small hotel room for an undetermined amount of time. This legislation not only utilizes existing infrastructure on closing military bases to meet a national temporary housing shortage, but it also builds temporary communities capable of meeting all of the needs of its residents."

Under the National Emergency Centers Establishment Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security is required to select the location of the six sites within 60 days of the bill becoming law. The legislation authorizes \$250 million to pay for the establishment of the Centers.

### **Local News Articles**

**Jacksonville mayor doesn't want jets**  
Richmond Times-Dispatch (Richmond, VA)  
October 20, 2005

Virginia Beach may have less of a fight to keep Oceana Naval Air Station and its 12,000 jobs.

Mayor John Peyton of Jacksonville, Fla., announced today that he is stopping efforts to

bring the East Coast master jet-base operations to nearby Cecil Field.

Jacksonville had been arguing its case to acquire the Navy jet squadrons and jobs from Virginia on the basis that Cecil Field was a better, safer alternative.

BRAC voted to realign the operations at Oceana to the former Cecil Field unless costly steps are taken by the end of March to curb suburban encroachment on Oceana's crash zones.

The Florida Times-Union Web site reported today that Peyton told Gov. Jeb Bush, the city's congressional delegation and the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission about his decision to stop lobbying for the move.

### **Mayor Halts Effort to Attract Navy To Cecil Field**

News4Jax.com (Jacksonville, FL)  
October 20, 2005

Jacksonville, Fla. -- Mayor John Peyton announced today that he has listened to the public's wishes and is giving up efforts to reopen Cecil Field as a Navy jet base.

"It is clear to me and I think it's clear to our City Council that this community does not want a master jet base," Peyton said at a midday news conference. "And this community does also not want to be in limbo -- having an uncertain future -- and I appreciate that, as well."

The announcement comes after Peyton and Florida Gov. Jeb Bush mounted an ambitious, two-month effort to persuade the Base Closure and Realignment Commission to move the Navy's only East Coast master jet base to the sprawling Westside property that the Navy vacated nearly a decade ago.

BRAC was looking for an alternative to the Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia, which the commissioners said was becoming handicapped by commercial and residential development nearby.

But mounting opposition from Westside residents and community activists and an admitted miscalculation of the number of homes and businesses in the potential crash zone around Cecil Field's runways prompted Peyton to withdraw a request for a \$50 million bond issue to relocate businesses that would be displaced from Cecil Commerce Center.

Jacksonville and military officials said it would cost \$250 million to restore the 23,000-acre Cecil Commerce Center to be a Navy jet base.

Earlier this week City Council President Kevin Hyde told the mayor he thinks private development is the way to go at Cecil.

Peyton received applause from a small crowd gathered at the Westside Regional Library to hear the mayor's announcement.

"Residents across the Westside have invested in their communities, many have invested your life savings into their homes, certainly their businesses," Peyton said.

The mayor said the city's efforts will return to attracting commercial development to Cecil Commerce Center.

"Had the United States Navy come to Jacksonville and told us, 'Look, it is in the best interest of the security of this country and the military that the Navy be here,' ... that would be one thing," Peyton said. "The Navy basically testified before BRAC that they'd rather be in Oceana."

### **BRAC Process Was a Roller Coaster**

New London Day (New London, CT)  
Robert A. Hamilton  
October 20, 2005

Supporters of the Naval Submarine Base were stunned to learn May 13 that the Department of Defense was recommending a total closure, and overjoyed on Aug. 24 when the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted to keep it open.

In between were a series of highs and lows for "Team Connecticut," a partnership of state and federal officials and the Subbase Realignment Coalition, a grassroots group.

At times, the prospects seemed bleak; at other times hopes brightened — sometimes on the same day.

On May 25, for instance, the state legislature voted to provide up to \$10 million for infrastructure improvements around the base to make it more attractive to the Navy. But the same day, the Navy unveiled detailed plans for a pullout from Groton, with most of the workforce leaving in three distinct waves in 2008, 2010 and 2011.

Coalition Chairman John C. Markowicz devoted most of his summer to the battle, and recalls one particularly tough eight-day period.

On June 8, he had an afternoon meeting in Washington, D.C., with the commission staff who would oversee the Navy recommendations. The head staffer was a retired surface warfare officer who seemed unwelcoming at best, antagonistic at worst. Then, that evening, he met with some retired submarine admirals at the Naval Submarine League symposium across the river in Arlington, Va., who seemed reluctant to enter the fight.

But on June 16 the coalition's consultant, retired Navy Capt. Mario Fiori, arranged a meeting with some of those same admirals, who would later lend their weight to the mêlée.

Despite having some top-notch analysts on the job, people who usually do well at figuring out which way the political winds are blowing, however, nobody knew what to expect on that final day.

As early as Aug. 1, U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., said publicly the team was "in much better shape," but he cautioned that there was still a lot of work left to do. And the team continued to work up until minutes before the vote.

At the Hyatt Regency in Arlington, Va., on Aug. 24, as the commission was about to meet to vote on the base realignment and closure or BRAC proposals, U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, loitered in the lobby trying to corner a commissioner for a last-minute pitch in favor of the base.

Back in Groton at the Hampton Inn, Markowicz was holding his breath as each of the commissioners in turn commented on the motion to remove the base from the closure list.

One after another supported the motion, until former U.S. Energy Secretary and White House Chief of Staff Samuel K. Skinner delivered the coup de grace, noting that if the Navy really believed it did not need three submarine bases on the East Coast, it “picked the wrong one to eliminate.”

“That was when we realized we had the fifth vote, and we were safe,” Markowicz said. After more than three months of emotional whiplash, the BRAC process was effectively over.

Perhaps the worst part of the process was that, unlike in previous BRACs, the information the Pentagon used to develop its list was classified for several weeks after the list was released, and even then came out in fits and starts.

“It cost us a full month,” Markowicz said. “We put our case together very late in large part because we weren’t given the information we needed to do it until the middle of June, or later.”

That gave Team Connecticut just a couple of weeks to comb through thousands of pages of material before the commission hearing July 6, and it hurt the case badly, he said.

For instance, on July 6 he told the commission he was puzzled how Groton could have received no credit for the ability to do nuclear repairs; later, he found in the data that it was because Electric Boat does those repairs under a contract to the Navy, an arrangement reached several years ago at significant savings to the Navy.

It also wasn’t until early August that the coalition managed to process the Navy data and realize that, because of the way the process was weighted against Groton, the base could have gotten a perfect score, 100 points, and Kings Bay could have gotten a zero, and the recommendation would still have been to close Groton.

As more of the information dribbled out, however, another development added momentum to the fight to save the base: retired submariners began to weigh in.

The retired community had stayed out of the three BRAC battles in the 1990s, even when it appeared Groton might be closed, but as time passed this year more and more entered the fray. In August, nine retired three- and four-star admirals signed a letter encouraging the commission to remove Groton from the list.

Then, just days before the commission’s deliberations, former President Jimmy Carter, who was a submariner in the 1950s — and who lives in Georgia, a state that would benefit from Groton’s closure — appealed to the commission to overturn the Pentagon recommendation.

“I’m not sure any other base on the list had support like this,” said retired Adm. Bruce DeMars, whose last job was heading the office of Naval Reactors. “As you can expect from submariners, they took the case apart and took a good look at it. I’m very proud of the work that’s been done.

“It’s an example of what I call ‘submarine force binding energy,’” he continued. “It’s a term from physics. The strength of the combined group is much better than the sum of the individuals.”

In retrospect, it’s clear the commission has suspicions about the case to close Groton right from the start. At a hearing May 17, when it heard from the Chief of Naval Operations and other top Navy officials, commissioners asked questions that would become key to their decision to reject the recommendation. How much would moving the Submarine School from Groton to Kings Bay, Ga., disrupt activities?

Would an overcrowded Navy base in Norfolk, Va., be able to accept two squadrons of submarines from Groton? Were the cost estimates for the move unrealistically low?

In public and private comments, commissioners always seemed to leave doubt that they were entirely convinced that the arguments to keep Groton open were gaining any ground, either.

From the start, however, the commissioners were accessible to base advocates, and clearly some of the arguments that were put forth had some impact.

Meeting with the commissioners privately on May 31, for instance, Markowicz observed that if Groton was closed the only Navy ships north of New Jersey would be the Nautilus in Groton and the Constitution in Boston, both museum pieces. Later, Commission Chairman Anthony Principi would note publicly on several occasions that he had serious concerns about the de-militarization of the entire northeast.

Advocates for the base inundated the commission with material about why the base should not be closed. They argued that the Navy had underestimated the cost and overestimated the savings from closing Groton, that the environmental cleanup could take years and millions more than was budgeted, that it would devastate the area economically, and it would leave the Navy short of submarine pier space in the Atlantic.

While some of those arguments merited mention by the commissioners in various forums, they cited two key reasons to take the base off the closure list: the possibility that more submarines would be needed to fight future threats, and Groton would give the Navy valuable “surge” capacity; and over the years the development of the base and nearby shipbuilder Electric Boat had created a submarine warfare “center of excellence” that was too valuable to risk by dismantling it and sending its pieces to Norfolk and Kings Bay.

“New London Submarine Base is more than piers and parking spaces for nuclear powered

submarines. It is truly a center of excellence for submarine warfare,” said Principi. “We close New London down, we will never get it back. I think it would be a tragic mistake, a tragic loss to this nation, if this recommendation was to be approved.”

## **Jacksonville Withdraws Effort To Lure Oceana Jets**

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

Louis Hansen

October 21, 2005

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Faced with mounting opposition to a plan to return Navy jet squadrons to Florida, the mayor of Jacksonville announced Thursday afternoon his city will cease trying to lure operations from Oceana Naval Air Station.

The decision could cripple efforts by a federal base closing panel to move 250 strike fighter jets from Virginia Beach to the former Cecil Field Naval Air Station.

“The feedback I’ve received in recent weeks makes it clear that the community does not want the master jet base to return, and I respect that,” Mayor John Peyton said in a statement. Peyton said the idea was worth pursuing, but, “at the end of the day, the quality of life for residents of the Westside is the most important thing.”

The former Navy base is located in the largely undeveloped western section of the city, about 15 miles from downtown. Although the area is rural, residential and commercial builders have moved quickly since the base closed in 1999 to carve suburban neighborhoods out of the pine for ests. Property values have spiked, enriching land owners and enticing developers.

Residents near the base organized shortly after the late August decision to consider re opening the field and scored several political victories. The well-organized and funded opposition drew support from deep skepticism among residents and parts of the business community.

“I’m elated. I’m elated,” said Earl Hindman, a retiree who lives two miles from Cecil Field. “Who says you can’t fight City Hall and win?”

Virginia leaders said Jacksonville’s decision bolstered their efforts to preserve Oceana. They cautioned that the region must continue to address encroachment around the base.

“We still need to work with the Navy on the long-term issues,” said state Sen. Kenneth W. Stolle, a Republican whose district includes the base.

In August, the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission set up a series of conditions to force Virginia to curb development around Oceana or face losing the fighter jets based there. Commissioners said the dense suburban development compromised pilot training.

The BRAC Commission ordered the state, Virginia Beach and Chesapeake to spend at least \$15 million annually to buy property in crash zones around the base and Fentress Naval Auxiliary Landing Field.

The relocation also depended on Jacksonville clearing Cecil Commerce Center of its private tenants and returning 17,000 acres to the military. The Florida delegation promised \$200 million to buy out leases and relocate tenants.

The BRAC Commission gave Virginia until March to meet tough conditions on development around Oceana. Florida would have to empty and return Cecil Field to the military by December 2006.

A key committee of Jacksonville City Council members this week rejected a proposal to borrow \$50 million to relocate private tenants. Florida Gov. Jeb Bush’s office had vowed to step in and pay for the entire effort.

Bush said Thursday that he was disappointed to learn that Jacksonville was withdrawing its support. He stopped short of saying the pursuit was over.

“Our state remains committed to partnering with the Department of Defense to provide our men and women in uniform the best training environment and quality of life anywhere,” Bush said.

But Bush and the state would have to win cooperation from Jacksonville leaders to deliver the site back to the Navy to reopen the base. The city and its agencies control much of the property surrounding Cecil Commerce Center.

Jacksonville residents began efforts to kill the proposal almost immediately after the federal commission handed it down. They formed the Better Westside Project, a collection of farm families who lived on the land for generations and families who moved into the several new communities built since the Navy left Cecil Field.

Mike Griffin, president of the group, and his family have lived on the land for five generations. The Griffins started as cattle farmers and now own about 500 acres and run a flourishing horse trailer business, Diamond D Trailer Sales.

In an interview last week at his Jacksonville office, Griffin said the quality of life has improved since the Navy left. Land prices have risen to \$30,000 per acre, he said. A new mall is planned, anchored by a Macy’s or a Saks Fifth Avenue.

Griffin said the city and Westside community have planned redevelopment for the area almost since the original BRAC decision in 1993. They envisioned a growing bedroom community which would retain its rural character with horse farms and large lots.

“Development is better for the community without the Navy,” Griffin said. “The base stops growth.”

The former installation and rural region have changed substantially since the final F/A-18 Hornet fly over in September 1999.

The Defense Department briskly signed over to Florida and Jacksonville agencies the vast, Cold War-era complex of airplane hangars, barracks, 2-mile-long runways, and thousands of surrounding acres of pine forest.

After six years and nearly \$200 million in public investment, the honky-tonks and logging forests have receded and were replaced by big highway bypasses, sculpted golf courses, and homes selling for \$200,000 to more than \$1 million. Developers who raised new neighborhoods in Suffolk and suburban Richmond have begun building golf course communities around the site.

Less than two miles from the runways, show horses prance around a new \$40 million equestrian center built by the city. The recreational campus also includes an Olympic-sized pool, fitness center and a cluster of lighted fast-pitch softball fields.

Although the region retains its rural character like sections of Chesapeake and Suffolk, plans for many more suburban enclaves wait on conference room tables in the offices of developers and city planners. Many, like the equestrian center, would lie in high-noise or crash zones around an active master jet base. By city estimates, almost 900 homes and the recreation center are built in high-risk areas.

The BRAC decision also left the small but growing business community at the former base in flux.

Cecil Commerce Center has filled its eight hangars with tenants including Boeing, the Department of Homeland Security and Florida Community College. The business park has become a hub of 1,500 employees of various defense and aviation companies.

Although property off the flight line is vacant, federal grants have allowed the Jacksonville Airport Authority to improve the runway, replace lighting, and refurbish and expand its hangars.

A California-based developer converted about 100 base houses into Cecil Pines, an active senior community. The single-story concrete homes sit under 50-foot stands of pine trees, just a short walk from the golf course.

Byran A. Beinkampen, executive director, said the community filled up soon after it opened in 2001 and had a one-year waiting list. The company planned to expand, Beinkampen said, "when this mess happened." Those plans are on hold.

Flightstar Aircraft Services Inc., a commercial aircraft maintenance company, recently moved into a renovated, 210,000-square-foot hangar with the help of taxpayer subsidies.

The 300-employee business converts passenger planes into cargo haulers and performs maintenance for several airlines. Flightstar Vice President Matt Eaton said the company tripled its business at its new facility.

The locally owned company hopes to double in size in two years, Eaton said. But after the BRAC decision, clients called to ask if the business would still live up to their contracts. If the process drags on, he said, it could become a "nightmare environment."

Eaton said it would cost at least \$50 million to move and re-establish the business at another airport. That would consume more than one-quarter of the public funds Florida earmarked to relocate about two dozen tenants.

Michael D. Stewart, a spokesman for the airport authority, said the rebuilding effort has come to a standstill.

"We thought we were a poster child for what could happen to a base," Stewart said. "It's a hard sell, to recruit companies, right now."

On Thursday, Peyton acknowledged the toll taken by the harsh bidding war created by the BRAC Commission.

"This isn't fair to us or to Virginia, but it's the hand we were dealt with," he said.

“We’ve all been uncomfortable with the limbo this has created, and it’s time to turn our attention back to other issues that are important to the citizens of Jacksonville.”

Katja Palmer , a spokeswoman for the Better Westside Project, celebrated by having a beer with neighbors in the park.

Palmer said the group was able to persuade city leaders that their community would develop better, high-paying jobs without the Navy. The 2,000-member group had begun advertising on radio and television, warning that re opening the military base would set a dangerous precedent.

“It really was not in the best interest of this area,” she said, before rushing out to an evening victory rally. “The voices of the people did make a difference.”

### **Jacksonville Ends Push To Revive Closed Base**

Tampa Tribune (Tampa, FL)  
Jerome R. Stockfish  
October 21, 2005

TALLAHASSEE -- Jacksonville's mayor has halted efforts to relocate a Virginia naval air base to Cecil Field.

Mayor John Peyton withdrew the city's support for the move Thursday, saying feedback from residents "makes it clear that the community does not want the master jet base to return, and I respect that." On Thursday, he told Gov. Jeb Bush, congressmen and members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission of the city's stance.

Peyton initially supported the proposal to move 200 fighter jets and 11,000 jobs from Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia to the Jacksonville base, which was closed by the Navy in 1999. The site now is a business park.

The Navy has objected to urban encroachment at Oceana. The Pentagon ordered officials from Virginia and the communities surrounding the

base to start acquiring some 1,800 homes in areas vulnerable to crashes, or the base would relocate.

Bush quickly offered Cecil Field.

On Thursday, the governor said he was disappointed with the city's withdrawal of its support.

Peyton said he still thinks the jet base would have been enormously positive for the city's economy. But opponents complained about noise and safety issues and said they were not consulted on the proposal.

### **Base not safe yet, analysts say**

The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)  
Dale Eisman  
October 21, 2005

WASHINGTON — The collapse of Florida’s attempt to secure the Navy’s East Coast master jet base does not guarantee a secure future for Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach, the jets’ current home, federal officials and defense analysts said Thursday.

Instead, some said , it places Oceana’s fate in the hands of Defense Department and Navy officials, who in July said the base meets their needs for now but that they hope ultimately to build a new, state-of-the-art installation somewhere else.

“This throws us into completely uncharted territory,” said Jeremiah Gertler, a 1995 base closing commission staffer now working at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

“One would think, with no viable alternative, Oceana is off the hook,” said Christopher Hellman, a base closing analyst at the Center for Arms Control in Washington. But the Navy, which already has hired consultants to evaluate its basing needs and how best to meet them, might yet decide to move elsewhere, he cautioned.

A Navy spokeswoman, Lt. Kathy Sandoz, said Thursday that the service study will continue, despite Jacksonville, Fla., Mayor John Peyton's withdrawal of plans to revive a former base in his city as a home for the jets.

Navy officials have acknowledged that developing a completely new base would take years and cost as much as \$2 billion, putting additional strain on an already tight budget. The funds needed for a new base "are the same resources I'd be using to build a future Navy," Adm. Mike Mullen, the chief of naval operations, told reporters last week.

Still, Mullen insisted he has "no predisposition" to stay at Oceana or go elsewhere.

Other officials and analysts said it may be days or weeks before the full effect of Jacksonville's withdrawal becomes clear. They noted that the recommendations of the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which demanded that Virginia Beach create a long-term program to acquire land in high-risk areas near Oceana or face loss of the jets, remain on track to become law next month.

And it's always possible, some cautioned, that Peyton and other local and state leaders in Florida could reverse course again and renew efforts to snare the jets.

Given all the uncertainty, U.S. Rep. Thelma Drake,

R-2nd District, said state and local officials need to continue moving to stop new homes and businesses from being built along Oceana's flight paths and to roll back existing development.

In Richmond, Gov. Mark R. Warner issued a statement promising to continue work on "developing strategies that meet the needs of our U.S. Navy partners while causing the least disruption to Virginia Beach property owners."

Warner has warned that if Oceana closes, the Navy may decide to move other facilities,

particularly aircraft carriers, to a port closer to the jets' new base.

Alarmed at the proliferation of homes and businesses in "crash zones" near Oceana, the nine-member BRAC Commission concluded in August that the Navy should find a new home for its East Coast tactical aircraft.

But after neither the Navy nor the commission could come up with an immediate alternative, the panel agreed that the planes can remain at Oceana if the city stops new development in the most dangerous areas and spends at least \$15 million annually to evict homeowners and businesses already in place.

Failing that, the commission said, the planes should go to Cecil Field, a Navy base-turned-business park on the outskirts of Jacksonville. State and local leaders there had provided assurances that tenants would be cleared from the property and offered other incentives – promises Peyton effectively withdrew on Thursday.

The BRAC Commission's chairman, former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi, was unavailable for comment Thursday on Jacksonville's move.

In an essay submitted this week to newspaper editorial pages, Principi defended the commission's handling of Oceana. He also warned that unless Virginia and Virginia Beach act aggressively to stop development around the base, Navy aviators "will continue to experience degraded operational training and readiness, and the local civilian population would suffer continued exposure to unnecessary risks."

Both Gertler and Robert McCreary, a BRAC Commission spokesman, said that because the deadline for BRAC Commission action has passed, the panel has no power to dictate new conditions for Oceana now that Cecil Field is no longer an option.

"We can't go back and make changes," McCreary said.

And because the BRAC law requires President Bush and Congress to consider the commission's recommendations as a package, neither can act now on Oceana without jeopardizing the panel's proposals to close 21 major bases across the country and shuffle forces at dozens of others.

Lawmakers have until early November to act, though the deadline would be extended if either house takes an extended recess.

### **Florida halts efforts to return station to air base status**

New Bern Sun Journal (New Bern, NC)  
Sue Book  
October 21, 2005

Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow members were not surprised to learn of Jacksonville, Florida's decision to halt efforts to return Cecil Field to Navy air base status.

With the incentives package used to lure the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission unraveling, Mayor James Peyton announced midday Thursday he would reel in the line he and Gov. Jeb Bush cast in late July, according to reports in the Times-Union of Jacksonville and the Virginian Pilot.

The pair met with BRAC commissioners and attended and participated in several formal hearings, offering to return to the Navy the 23,000-acre tract cleared from that use with the 1993 BRAC. They offered \$150 million, including \$50 million the Jacksonville City Council indicated Oct. 5 it wouldn't deliver the day after it became apparent the number of homes in the airfields' accident potential zone had been understated.

"It is clear to me and I think it's clear to our City Council that this community does not want a master jet base," Peyton is quoted as telling Westside property owners who mounted a concerted opposition against reversing movement toward a commerce center in favor of the Navy.

In a statement issued Thursday afternoon, Bush said he was "disappointed to learn today" of the city's decision "to withdraw its support for the relocation of the Atlantic Fleet Carrier Fighter Wings from Naval Air Station Oceana to Cecil Field in Jacksonville."

"This could scuttle the transfer of the F/A-18 Super Hornets from Oceana to Cecil Field," said Jim Davis, ACT member and Craven County Economic Development Director. "And, if it looks like they could stay at Oceana or a future Master Jet Base, that would certainly affect efforts on an outlying landing field placement."

"The information the Florida folks gave the BRAC Commission has turned out to be wrong, wrong in a big way," said Hugh Overholt, who led the ACT staff's BRAC defense for MCAS Cherry Point and NAVAIR.

"It turns out there were 900 homes in the accident potential zone and they did not anticipate the opposition from the people on the Westside. There are a lot of folks there who just don't want them back," said Overholt. "These airplanes are turning into orphans and the BRAC Commission's recommendations are falling apart."

"If Oceana stays open and the aircraft stay at Oceana, we fully expect to get two squadrons of F/A-18 Super Hornets in 2007," said Jimmy Sanders, ACT president. "In that respect, we are happy that it appears Jacksonville is backing away."

"Apparently that is what the Navy wants and that's what's going to happen," Sanders said.

"The Chief of Naval Operations has put together a commission to look at all options for Super Hornets, Oceana, Cecil Field or building a brand new Master Jet Base," said Overholt. "They plan to have their work done by mid-November. They've been looking at this for a long time."

### **Beach leaders, residents react cautiously to Cecil decision**

The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

Jon W. Glass And Marisa Taylor  
October 20, 2005

VIRGINIA BEACH — City and state officials said they will huddle with lawyers today to begin assessing whether they still must comply with a series of conditions imposed by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission for keeping jets at Oceana Naval Air Station.

The most onerous condition requires the city and state to condemn and buy about 3,400 homes, and many businesses, in high-risk accident-potential zones around the master jet base .

“It’s a little premature to say we don’t have to comply with the order,” said state Sen. Kenneth W. Stolle, R-Virginia Beach. But, he added, “I think it’s nothing but good news for us.”

City leaders and residents reacted cautiously Thursday after the mayor of Jacksonville, Fla., announced he will stop pursuing Oceana’s jets.

“My first reaction is caution – to stay the course and not jump at anything,” Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf said at a news conference at her Kempsville home. “Maybe inside a voice is saying, ‘You can smile a little bit.’”

At best, Jacksonville’s decision means the fighter jets will stay at Oceana and the threat of having to condemn homes and businesses around the base will go away.

But nobody was willing to say that Thursday.

“I think it’s much too soon to rule anything in or out,” Oberndorf said.

“I hope we can throw the ‘poison pills’ out of the BRAC order and then plot a course for us to co-exist with the Navy to protect their ability to train and to protect people’s property rights,” said Stolle, who is chairman of a state commission appointed by Gov. Mark R. Warner to assess the BRAC conditions and recommend how to proceed.

Residents in the affected accident-potential zones said they were encouraged Thursday but in no mood to celebrate.

“I think it’s a dim light at the end of the tunnel, but I wouldn’t bet the ranch on it,” said David Gracie, a homeowner in Nottingham Estates.

Marian Linett, who lives in nearby Cheltenham Square, also remained skeptical.

“I’ll believe it when they put it in writing that they’re not going to touch my house,” she said. “I don’t trust any of them.”

Joe Ferrara, a Cheltenham Square resident, said, “I feel some relief, but I wouldn’t call it a great sense of relief. The city has taken so many unexpected turns that I have no idea what course they’re going to take.”

The mayor and other City Council members hinted that condemnation would be a dead issue if the BRAC mandate becomes invalid. The Navy, they said, has never asked that existing homes be condemned.

“Fundamentally, there’s no will on council to condemn people’s homes,” Councilman James L. Wood said.

Councilman Richard Maddox, the only council member who rejected the BRAC demands from the outset, said he believes Virginia Beach has no reason to try to condemn or buy property in the accident zones.

“The mayor and the City Council of Jacksonville listened to their citizens and said no to BRAC,” Maddox said. “It’s time that the city of Virginia Beach did the same thing.”

Councilman Jim Reeve said he had come to the same conclusion shortly before Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton’s announcement.

“If compliance means throwing people out of their homes, I don’t agree with it,” Reeve said.

Reeve said he hopes the Beach City Council will decide soon how to proceed.

“The lives of over 3,000 families are on hold,” Reeve said. “We’ve got to make our position known.”

Even if Jacksonville’s action gets Virginia Beach off the BRAC hook, council members said they will pursue plans to restrict the development of new homes and other incompatible development around Oceana.

The city agreed to do that before the BRAC demands through a joint land-use study with the Navy.

In May, the City Council endorsed the land-use study. It calls for restricting new homes in moderate and high jet-noise zones around Oceana, including the resort area. The study also calls for buying undeveloped property under the flight path between Oceana and the Navy’s training field in Chesapeake.

Regardless of BRAC, Councilman Bob Dyer said, the Navy’s long-term plans to stay at Oceana will depend on how well the city controls future growth.

“If anything, we’ve got to work harder to establish a better working relationship to keep the Navy here,” Dyer said. “If we’ve learned one lesson out of this, it’s that we’ve got to listen to the Navy. We can’t take anything for granted.”

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

N/A

### **Additional Notes**

## **PA Governor Rendell Tells Congressional Committee of National Guard's Importance; Federal Role in Equipping Guard**

PR Newswire US  
October 20, 2005

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20 /PRNewswire/ -- Governor Edward G. Rendell testified before the U.S. House Committee on Government Reform today on the National Guard's critical

importance to the commonwealth and the country. He also discussed current challenges facing the Guard as they serve our country overseas as well as in country after the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The following is the Governor's prepared statement to the federal panel.

"Thank you Chairman Davis. It is a great pleasure to appear before you today to give you one Governor's perspective on the critical role of the National Guard at home and abroad. I am honored to appear on this panel.

The National Guard is the only military force shared by the federal and the state governments. The status of the National Guard as a state military force is rooted in our constitution, and our militia heritage goes back to a time before we were an independent nation.

In many ways, today's National Guard carries out the genius of our founders and it constitutes "federalism in action" in the military context.

Formation of the militias predates the founding of our country. The Massachusetts National Guard traces its lineage to the first regiments established by the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. Benjamin Franklin founded the Pennsylvania National Guard when he formed the Associators in Philadelphia in 1747. In 1755, the colonial assembly passed Pennsylvania's first militia law. The year 2005 is the 250th Anniversary of Pennsylvania's first militia law.

Today's National Guard, in Pennsylvania and across America, is the modern militia reserved to the states by the United States Constitution. Based on a dual enlistment system, every member of the Pennsylvania National Guard takes an oath of enlistment in a reserve component of the Armed Forces (the National Guard of the United States) and in the modern state militia (the state National Guard). These state and federal military entities are linked inseparably. On a day-to-day basis, the Guard remains under state command and control and the governors serve as commanders-in-chief of

their state Guard forces. When the Guard is called into active federal service -- as with our soldiers and airmen in Iraq -- they are under the command and control of the federal government.

There are about 20,000 soldiers and airmen in the Pennsylvania Army and Air National Guard. Since September 11, 2001, a total of 13,372 Guard members have deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Noble Eagle. Today more than 3,000 members of the Pennsylvania National Guard are deployed in Iraq.

When they are not deployed overseas, our Guard personnel serve in readiness centers, armories and Air National Guard bases across Pennsylvania. The Guard provides me as Governor with a well-trained and equipped military force to respond to state emergencies such as floods, blizzards, hurricanes and local emergency situations.

Pennsylvania is home to the National Guard's 3rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team. These National Guard teams provide DoD's unique expertise and capabilities to assist state governors in preparing for and responding to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incidents as part of a state's emergency response structure. Each team consists of 22 highly skilled, full-time National Guard members who are federally resourced, trained and exercised, and employs federally approved CBRN response doctrine.

The National Guard is a partnership between the states and the federal government. As any of you who have been involved in a partnership knows, they involve give and take. Today's National Guard is supposed to involve day-to-day communication, collaboration and interaction between the state and federal governments. The National Guard Bureau, a bureau within the Department of Defense, serves as channel of communications between DoD and the states.

It's fair to say that the federal government is the senior partner in this partnership between the state and federal governments in terms of the supplies, the equipment and the funding it

provides for most National Guard activities. But what's sometimes overlooked is that the states provide the most precious resource of all to the National Guard: the young men and women who serve their state and their nation and who risk, and sometimes give, their lives in this service.

The states recognize how important it is to recruit and retain the high quality personnel necessary to maintain the strength of the Guard. For example, in Pennsylvania, we invest about \$10 million per year in our Educational Assistance Program to provide public-service educational grants to new enlistees in, and members of, the Pennsylvania National Guard. This is an important recruiting and retention tool that helps keep the Guard strong to accomplish both its state and its federal missions.

During 2005, we've seen examples of when the National Guard partnership between the states and the federal government worked well and when it broke down. Let me make it clear that I reject the notion that because the federal government provides the great bulk of the funding for the National Guard, it can ignore the role of the states in command and control of the Guard's forces or overlook the concerns of the states with regard to Guard funding, equipment and strength. The Congress, acting to implement the constitutional status of the modern National Guard, has enacted legislation to set the appropriate balance between the states and the federal government with regard to National Guard units. And this balance must be honored by the Department of Defense.

One place where the National Guard partnership between the states and the federal government broke down badly was in the actions of the Department of Defense and Air Force with regard to the 2005 round of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The Department of Defense and the Air Force chose to ignore clear congressional mandates requiring the consent of the Governors with regard to major changes to National Guard units. They argued that the BRAC process superseded the requirement for input from the states and that it was impractical to ask 54 National Guard entities for input. In an incredible effort to

justify elimination of Air National Guard units and missions across America, the Air Force even suggested that the Civil Air Patrol could fill in for the Air Guard. Don't get me wrong. The Civil Air Patrol is a great organization, but it is no substitute for the Air National Guard in carrying out homeland security missions and helping me address my responsibilities to respond to state emergencies.

Let me take a brief moment to describe what happened with the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. For several years, my staff, including the Adjutant General and the Commander of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, received briefings indicating that the 111th, which flies the A-10 Warthog aircraft out of Willow Grove Joint Reserve Base, was likely to receive additional mission aircraft as part of the future total force planning process. Imagine our surprise and dismay when, on May 13, we received the DoD recommendation that the 111th Fighter Wing should be deactivated. The DoD recommendation came without a word of advance wording. There was no coordination, no request for input, and certainly no request for my approval as Governor for the elimination of this important Air National Guard unit.

The 111th has about 1,000 full-time and part-time military personnel. It is based at Willow Grove, just outside Philadelphia, which is a key strategic location in our state. The 111th does not consist of just pilots and airplanes. It has security forces, mechanics, medical personnel and all the rest that make up a modern fighter wing. Seventy-five percent of the members of the 111th have deployed in the last four years. These personnel are key assets to me as Governor in addressing potential threats to the security of our homeland. What's more, I believe it is vital to maintain military flying operations at Willow Grove to provide a surge capability to respond to emergencies in the Philadelphia region.

Congress has mandated that the United States Government cannot make changes to the branch, organization or allotment of National Guard units located within the states without the

approval of the Governor. The same law provides that I as Governor cannot disband a National Guard unit that receives federal funds without the approval of the President. This law aptly describes the fundamental principles of federalism upon which the National Guard is built. Neither the state nor the federal government can make basic changes to National Guard units without the input of the other.

At least that's the way it's supposed to work. But, the Air Force decided that the BRAC law superseded these other federal laws, and that it could completely ignore the states in making recommendations to eliminate Air National Guard units and missions. The 111th Fighter Wing was the only Air National Guard unit in the country actually recommended for deactivation but others were stripped of the aircraft and personnel.

Aside from ignoring what we saw as clear legal requirements, I was very surprised by the Air Force's attitude toward the National Guard in general and to the partnership between the Guard and the states in particular. An Air Force spokesman, testifying before the BRAC Commission, said that it would be unreasonable and impractical to expect the Air Force to talk to 54 or even 28 National Guard entities in making plans to eliminate units and missions. It was almost as if they were saying those pesky states stand in the way of us getting our job done. Somebody even suggested that the Governors would bring politics into the BRAC process!

As Governor of Pennsylvania, I was not going to stand by and watch DoD attempt to eliminate about one-fourth of the Air National Guard force in my state. In late May, I wrote to Secretary Rumsfeld to advise him that I did not consent to the proposed deactivation of the 111th, and in early July, Senators Arlen Specter, Rick Santorum and I filed suit in federal court seeking a declaratory judgment that the DoD violated the Governor consent statutes when they commenced action to deactivate an Air National Guard unit without the consent of the Governor.

We filed suit not just to stand up for the Guard. We filed suit to protect the vital principles of

federalism, grounded in our Constitution, that establish the National Guard as a military force shared by the state and the federal government. We also filed suit to stand up for Congress, which had passed laws clearly requiring consent of the Governor for certain changes to National Guard units. I was very pleased that Senators Specter and Santorum joined me in this litigation because their support emphasized that DoD's action were not just ignoring the Governor's prerogatives with regard to the National Guard but also the direction provided by the Congress.

In the end, Federal District Judge John Padova ruled in favor of the Commonwealth and held that DoD's recommendation for deactivation of the 111th Fighter Wing was "null and void." On the same day as the Court decision was issued, the BRAC Commission found that the DoD's recommendation substantially deviated from the BRAC criteria and overturned the proposed deactivation of the 111th Fighter Wing. The Commission also ruled that military flying operations should be maintained at Willow Grove. We believe the BRAC Commission should have stopped right there, but unfortunately, they went ahead to recommend that the A-10s assigned to the 111th be redistributed to other units, even as they encouraged the Air Force to maintain A-10s there.

As I said at the outset, the National Guard can only succeed in carrying out its critical role at home and abroad if the strong partnership between the state and federal government, first forged in our Constitution, is maintained and nurtured. The DoD's approach to the states in this year's BRAC recommendations for the Air National Guard represented a major breach of the trust upon which this partnership is built. I believe the DoD must take action to heal that breach and rebuild that trust. For Pennsylvania, the best way to start this effort would be for DoD to announce that it will cease and desist any plans or efforts to strip the 111th Fighter Wing of its A-10s. This action would restore the appropriate balance between state and federal needs and support our efforts to maintain a strong military force to address homeland

security issues in the southeastern part of my state.

If the 2005 DoD BRAC recommendations represented a breach in the partnership between the states and the federal government with regard to oversight and command and control of the National Guard, the Guard's role in responding to the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita should have shown how the partnership can work. Pennsylvania sent more than 2,500 Guard personnel to Louisiana and Mississippi to respond to the emergencies caused by these hurricanes. We responded promptly. Our Interim Satellite Incident Site Communications Set (ISISCS) deployed from Fort Indiantown Gap to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the first days after the storms and for more than a week it provided just about the only form of reliable communications to that region. It later redeployed to Texas in the wake of Hurricane Rita. We sent security and military police forces from several units, including the 111th Fighter Wing, to Louisiana within 24 hours after we received the request for support. About 200 Pennsylvania National Guard personnel deployed by air to Louisiana. And elements of our 213th Area Support Group and our 56th Brigade deployed by convoy to the area of devastation within just a few days.

These deployments were authorized under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact among the states, and we were prepared to send these personnel in a state active duty status. Fortunately, within a few days, the National Guard Bureau stepped up to the plate and decided that these personnel could deploy in a federally-funded state status under Title 32, United States Code. Use of Title 32 duty for this deployment maintained the essential principle of state command and control over National Guard forces while providing a mechanism for direct federal funding of this duty. I appreciate the response of the National Guard Bureau in authorizing duty in this status, and I believe it is a good example of how the partnership between the state and federal government can work.

When Guard personnel perform federally-funded state duty under Title 32 they remain

under state command and control. This is as it should be for nearly all domestic emergencies. I've heard suggestions that the President should have federalized the Guard and put them under federal command in this situation, but I believe that would have been wrong. I believe the active forces can and should play an important role in responding to major emergencies by providing humanitarian aid and assistance in search and rescue, evacuation and other essential missions. The idea that we should put active duty soldiers on the front line of civilian law enforcement does not follow from the lessons we should have learned from Katrina. There is nothing in federal law that prevents the use of the military and the Guard to perform the vast majority of missions that need to be performed in most major disasters. Like my fellow Governors, I see no need to diminish the responsibilities of state governors or the role of the state National Guard forces operating under state command and control in responding to state emergencies.

As Governor, I want our Guard to have the best possible equipment to carry out their missions. When our personnel are ordered to federal active duty to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, I want the federal government to do everything possible to make sure they have equipment that will keep them as safe as possible as they risk their lives to serve their country. I recognize that equipping the National Guard is a federal responsibility, but we in the states care deeply about this.

Over the last few years, Pennsylvania National Guard personnel have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I know that the Government Accountability Office report being issued today deals with the issue of "stay behind equipment" and how this impacts on Guard units when they return.

I recognize that it sometimes is appropriate to leave equipment, weapons systems, and protective gear in country rather than returning it with the unit when it redeploys to the United States and to Pennsylvania. This makes sense,

and I certainly would not question the military judgment about what equipment should be considered to stay behind.

But, it's vitally important that once our units return to Pennsylvania, they be resupplied with the equipment they need to perform their missions and that the replacement equipment they receive be of the same quantity and quality as the equipment that stayed behind in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our units need this equipment to train, to respond to homeland security missions and to respond to state emergencies. The need for force protection equipment and supplies does not end when the unit leaves the combat zones.

Let me give you some real world examples reported to me by Pennsylvania's Adjutant General, Major General Jessica L. Wright. When units returned from some of the earliest deployments to Iraq, they generally brought the most critical equipment back with them. There were a few exceptions. For example, Company A of the 28th Signal Battalion, was directed to leave 10 of 41 HUMVEE vehicles behind when they redeployed.

More serious concerns arose after the redeployment of Company G of the 104th Aviation, which deployed to Afghanistan. You might recall those great pictures of this unit, which flies the CH-47D helicopter, extracting personnel in various dangerous situations. The unit took a lot of equipment with them to Afghanistan and they were directed that a lot of equipment should stay behind when they redeployed. This included 7 CH-47D aircraft, trucks, generators, liter kits, radios, tents and the like. Company G has been back in the United States for ten months now. It has received five replacement CH-47s (of the 7 that stayed behind), but they report the aircraft are not of the same quality as those they deployed with. The unit has received very little of the other equipment that stayed behind in Afghanistan. Although they have been able to make do, this lack of critical equipment affects both training and mission readiness.

Another example is the 131st Transportation Company. Trucks, trailers, field kitchens, and

other gear stayed behind in Iraq when they returned to Williamstown. Fifty-nine tractors, and 118 trailers, stayed behind when they returned. The process of replacing this equipment has been too slow. And the unit is concerned that much of the replacement equipment is older models some with missing components. These trucks and trailers are the kinds of equipment we might need to respond to an emergency situation.

We also have serious concerns about the re-equipping of our Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) unit that just recently returned. They were directed that equipment including weapons, goggles, trucks, control stations, UAVs and launchers, should stay behind. Some of this equipment was first issued to the unit when it deployed. The question now is when will the unit receive the equipment it needs to train for and perform its mission.

Our largest deployments to Iraq are underway now, with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard forces assigned to Task Force Dragoon scheduled to redeploy over the next few weeks and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team scheduled to return next summer. It appears that the Army is trying to identify and use a more systematic approach for stay-behind equipment, but it also appears that these units will be directed to leave a good deal of equipment in country.

This process is a cause of serious concern to me. We send our brave men and women abroad to fight our country's battles with a feeling of great pride mixed with fear for their safety. Pennsylvania has lost nineteen Pennsylvania National Guard soldiers in Iraq, fifteen of whom died in the last two months. The Guard has proven again and again that it is a full partner in the total force when it comes to courage and sacrifice.

We delight when these personnel return safely to our country and our Commonwealth. I have personally participated in welcome ceremonies for many of our units, and I plan to participate in many more. As I told the Second Brigade Combat Team when it departed, I want to

welcome everyone back when their tour is completed. Sadly, that will be impossible.

Once these units return, it's important that they have the equipment to train and perform their vital military missions. The lack of equipment has not yet resulted in an inability to respond to a homeland security or emergency mission in Pennsylvania or other states, but it does not take much imagination to foresee a contingency where there could be negative impacts.

Today's National Guard plays a critical role in the security of our nation and our state. I depend on my Adjutant General and the military forces under her command and control to respond when we need to provide security to address terrorist threats at nuclear power plants or to provide airport security or to respond to floods or blizzard. When there is a disaster, be it natural or manmade, the Guard is the backbone of our ability to respond. Anything that weakens the Guard, whether it be the ill-advised effort to deactivate an Air National Guard fighter wing or the failure to re-equip a unit after redeployment, is of concern to me as a Governor and commander-in-chief of our Guard forces."