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May 17, 2005

Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Chairman Principi,

During your commission's deliberations, please consider my comments (enclosure 2) concerning the Department of Defense's recent BRAC recommendations for moving the US Army Aviation Technical Test Center from Fort Rucker to Redstone.

I understand that I don't have all the facts before me. However, the justifications presented in DoD's announcement (enclosure 1) seem very weak. Also, twenty-six years until payback seems outrageous.

I'm simply asking that your commission question the information provided by DoD to satisfy yourselves that this idea makes good sense.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input.


Bill Chancellor

Enclosure

- (1) Excerpt from Section 10: Recommendation – Technical Joint Cross-Service Group
- (2) Examination of DoD's justifications

Community Infrastructure Assessment: A review of community attributes indicates no issues regarding the ability of the infrastructure of the communities to support missions, forces, and personnel.

Environmental Impact: A conformity analysis is required at Wright-Patterson. An initial analysis indicates a conformity determination is not required. Additional operations may impact archeological or historic areas, which may restrict operations. Additional operations at Wright Patterson may further impact the Indiana Bat, a threatened and endangered species. The hazardous waste program at Wright-Patterson will require modification. Additional operations at Wright Patterson may impact wetlands, which may restrict operations. This recommendation has no impact on dredging; land use constraints or sensitive resource areas; marine mammals, resources, or sanctuaries; noise; or water resources. This recommendation will require spending approximately \$0.2M for waste management and environmental compliance activities. This cost was included in the payback calculation. This recommendation does not otherwise impact the costs of environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities. The aggregate environmental impact of all recommended BRAC actions affecting the bases in this recommendation has been reviewed. There are no known environmental impediments to implementation of this recommendation.

Establish Centers for Rotary Wing Air Platform Development & Acquisition, Test & Evaluation

Recommendation: Realign Wright Patterson Air Force Base, OH, by relocating Air Force Materiel Command V-22 activities in rotary wing air platform development and acquisition to Patuxent River, MD. Realign the Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, NJ, by relocating activities in rotary wing air platform development, acquisition, test and evaluation to Patuxent River, MD. Realign Ft. Rucker, AL, by relocating the Aviation Technical Test Center to Redstone Arsenal, AL, and consolidating it with the Technical Test Center at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Realign Warner-Robins Air Force Base, GA, by relocating activities in rotary wing air platform development and acquisition to Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Justification: This Air Land Sea & Space (ALSS) recommendation realigns and consolidates those activities that are primarily focused on Rotary Wing Air Platform activities in Development, Acquisition, Test and Evaluation (DAT&E). This action creates the Joint Center for Rotary Wing Air Platform DAT&E at the Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL, and enhances the Joint Center at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), Patuxent River, MD. The end state of this recommendation builds upon existing rotary wing air platform technical expertise and facilities in place at the two principal sites and provides focused support for future aviation technological advances in rotorcraft development.

The planned component moves enhance synergy by consolidating rotary wing work to major sites, preserving healthy competition, and leveraging climatic/geographic conditions and existing infrastructure, minimize environmental impact. These consolidations co-locate aircraft and aircraft support systems with development and acquisition personnel to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of rotary wing air platform design and development activities.

Handwritten notes:
1. 25. 11/07
Match for new members
3/15/07

Payback: The total estimated one-time cost to the Department of Defense to implement this recommendation is \$49.4M. The net of all costs and savings to the Department during the implementation period is a cost of \$40.2M. Annual recurring savings to the Department after implementation are \$2.8M with a payback expected in 26 years. The net present value of the costs and savings to the Department over 20 years is a cost of \$11.8M.

Economic Impact on Communities: Assuming no economic recovery, this recommendation could result in a maximum potential reduction of 108 jobs (59 direct jobs and 49 indirect jobs) over the 2006-2011 period in the Dayton, OH, Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is less than 0.1 percent of economic area employment;

Assuming no economic recovery, this recommendation could result in a maximum potential reduction of 24 jobs (13 direct jobs and 11 indirect jobs) over the 2006-2011 period, in the Edison, NJ, Metropolitan Division, which is less than 0.1 percent of economic area employment.

Assuming no economic recovery, this recommendation could result in a maximum potential reduction of 607 jobs (327 direct jobs and 280 indirect jobs) over the 2006-2011 period, in the Enterprise-Ozark, AL, Micropolitan Statistical Area, which is 1.3 percent of economic area employment.

Assuming no economic recovery, this recommendation could result in a maximum potential reduction of 82 jobs (50 direct jobs and 32 indirect jobs) over the 2006-2011 period in the Warner Robins, GA, Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is 0.1 percent of economic area employment.

The aggregate economic impact of all recommended actions on these economic regions of influence was considered and is at Appendix B of Volume I.

Community Infrastructure Assessment: A review of community attributes indicates no issues regarding the ability of the infrastructure of the communities to support missions, forces, and personnel.

Environmental Impact: This recommendation may have a minimal impact on cultural, archeological, and tribal resources and threatened and endangered species at both Patuxent River and Redstone Arsenal. Increased noise from aviation operations may result in operational restrictions on Redstone. Further evaluation is required. This recommendation has no impact on air quality; dredging; land use constraints or sensitive resource areas; marine mammals, resources, or sanctuaries; waste management; water resources; or wetlands. This recommendation will require spending approximately \$0.5M for environmental compliance activities. The payback calculation includes this cost. This recommendation does not otherwise impact the costs of environmental restoration, waste management, or environmental compliance activities. The aggregate environmental impact of all recommended BRAC actions affecting the bases in this recommendation has been reviewed. There are no known environmental impediments to implementation of this recommendation.

An examination of DoD's justifications for recommending relocation of ATTC to Redstone found in Section 10, Recommendations – Technical Joint Cross-Service Group, pages 26 and 27:

1. "This action creates the Joint Center for Rotary Wing Air Platform Development, Acquisition, Test and Evaluation at Redstone..."

This is a great sounding name for the organization but, who will be the leader? Will it be just one more conglomerate, without authority, comprised of government activities that continue to compete with each other?

2. "...builds upon existing rotary wing air platform technical expertise and facilities..."

ATTC's flight testing expertise at Fort Rucker was built and cultivated over a 40-year period. Does anyone really believe that the majority of technical experts found in this organization will move to Redstone? They will start job searches as soon as the decision is final and new engineers, technicians, and aircraft maintenance specialists will have to be recruited and trained at the new site. We're looking at an institutional 'brain drain' and a four or five year period of disruption and lost productivity.

And facilities...how can we say that we're building on existing facilities? ATTC will have to vacate its facilities (three large hangars and two office buildings) at Cairns Army Airfield, Fort Rucker and spend over \$40,000,000 to build new hangars and office space at an airfield with reduced capacity and significant ecological restrictions.

3. "...enhance synergy..."

ATTC is already working very effectively with its customers and developers at Redstone. In fact, ATTC established a directorate at Redstone in 2004 to ensure rapid, responsive support. Is it really necessary to move the entire organization to the developer's back yard to enhance synergy?

4. "...preserving healthy competition..."

How does moving ATTC to Redstone affect competition?

5. "...leveraging climatic/geographic conditions and existing infrastructure..."

How could anyone argue that the climate at Redstone is better for flight testing than at Fort Rucker? Flight testing requires high ceilings and extended visibility. I lived at Redstone for a while and the region is well-known for its severe storm season (March – September). There's no way that the number of good test days at Redstone can compare with those at Fort Rucker.

What is Redstone's geographic leverage? Does it have special airspace agreements in place for flight testing like those in place at Fort Rucker and Eglin AFB? Will the international airport serving Huntsville create a problem? Will the mountains to the north and east cause a problem?

As mentioned above, infrastructure is a negative argument. Vast hangar space and offices will have to be constructed at Redstone Airfield to support ATTC's test bed aircraft and equipment that are currently housed at Fort Rucker.

6. "...enhance efficiency and effectiveness of rotary wing air platform design and development activities..."

Fort Rucker is the home of Army Aviation. It's not just the school house for pilots, it's also where ATTC interfaces with the Army's Aviation Directorate for Combat Development, the Aviation Safety Center, and the Aeromedical Research Lab. It's the place where there are more helicopters than anywhere else in the world. It's the place where ATTC can quickly borrow an aircraft from the Aviation Center to perform a test when its own assets are in use.