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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 27, 2005

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PROJECTION FORCES

RESOURCES COMMITTEE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

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BRAC Commission

AUG 03 2005

Received

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

I would like to thank you for granting me an opportunity to speak before the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission on July 14, 2005, in Los Angeles, California. It was a great pleasure to lead the delegation from Guam in presenting our views to the BRAC Commission. I deeply appreciate your invitation and the attentiveness of the Commission members during the Guam presentation.

I would like to call the Commission's attention to certain additional information to supplement my testimony. First, I want to emphasize our views on the issue of submarine basing and realignment. Your Commission faces difficult decisions with regard to closing the Groton, Connecticut submarine facility. The initial BRAC recommendations send the 18 submarines homeported at Groton to Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia and to Norfolk, Virginia. I understand valid concerns have been raised about the capability of those two bases to absorb additional submarines realigned from Groton.

I would like to highlight to the Commission Guam's capacity to homeport additional submarines; as many as nine additional submarines can be accommodated according to the Congressional Budget Office (*Increasing the Mission Capability of the Attack Submarine Force*, March 2002). Navy officials have stated that the basing of submarines in Guam closer to their deployment areas will in effect double their number of mission days on station. The forward-basing in Guam greatly reduces the transit time of submarines and would be equivalent to a net gain of additional submarines for the fleet. According to Former Navy Secretary Richard Danzig, "three submarines could do the work of 10" if the Navy homeported them in Apra Harbor, Guam (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 25, 2000). Nine more submarines on Guam would do the work of thirty.

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Furthermore, Navy officials have indicated that they would like to homeport additional submarines in Guam. The Navy's recent classified internal study on submarine basing needs as reported in the *Boston Globe* (Section A.1, May 12, 2004) includes a recommendation that nine submarines be permanently homeported in Guam.

In sum, I urge you to consider Guam as a location for the realignment of Navy submarines. Should the commission ultimately decide to close Groton and also determine that Kings Bay and Norfolk cannot accommodate the full fleet of Groton's submarines, Guam stands "ready, willing and able" to receive any number of those submarines. Such an assignment would be consistent with the strategic interests of the United States, with the desires of Navy leadership and with cost efficiency. At a minimum, realignment of one submarine would restore the Navy's previous force level as it would replace the USS SAN FRANCISCO, which was recently reassigned from Guam to Bremerton for long term repairs.

Second, your Commission recently considered alternate options to closing the Portsmouth Shipyard including adding the Pearl Harbor Shipyard to your list for consideration. In a July 2005 report of the Government Accountability Office (GAO-05-785), the GAO raises serious concerns that the closure of Portsmouth will create a new demand on the remaining three U.S. Navy shipyards that exceeds capacity. The Navy, however, asserts that the three shipyards can handle the additional workload although each would have to function at full capacity with little or no ability to absorb unscheduled maintenance until such time as the Navy effectuates its projected downsizing.

I again call to your attention to the capability of the Guam Shipyard in addition to the three U.S. Navy shipyards. The now privatized Guam Shipyard stands ready to absorb overflow work, unscheduled maintenance and any additional missions that may arise. The need for the Navy to utilize this resource is of strategic importance as well. Incidents such as the recent underwater accident involving the USS SAN FRANCISCO demonstrate the tremendous value of having an American shipyard in the region. The USS SAN FRANCISCO was able to reach Guam for dry-docking in the Guam Shipyard where assessment and initial repairs took place. Furthermore, ensuring that the Guam Shipyard has year-round work is vital to maintaining a skilled shipyard workforce in the region. Consistent, year-round work at the Guam Shipyard ensures job stability and retention of valuable industrial job skills. Without stable and increased work from the U.S. Navy at the Guam Shipyard, there is the risk of a workforce loss, which would reduce the shipyard's value as a vital asset in supporting a forward deployed Navy in Asia.

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Finally, I wish to reiterate the issue we raised regarding consolidating telecommunication services for Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Forces Marianas. Under the present Department of Defense recommendation, most base support services would be consolidated under Navy control. However, we would note that it would be more efficient and cost effective to consolidate telecommunication services under Andersen Air Force Base control due to existing capabilities, efficiencies of operation, and the potential for contracting out of these services. I strongly recommend that the Commission adopt this recommendation in its final report.

Thank you once again for your warm reception of the Guam delegation at the Los Angeles, California Regional Hearing. Your professionalism and attentiveness to the issues we presented are deeply appreciated by the people of Guam. I hope that you will fully consider the additional information contained herein.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff should you have any questions or needs for further information. The staff contact in my office is Steve Hedger at 202-225-1188 or <stephen.hedger@mail.house.gov>. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress

cc: The Hon. Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense

The Hon. Gordon R. England
Secretary of the Navy

Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN
Chief of Naval Operations