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STATE OF WASHINGTON

ORIGINAL

April 28, 2005

Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
Polk Building, Suites 600 and 625  
2521 South Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

Congratulations on your appointments to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. As the Governor and Congressional Delegation of Washington State, we anticipate working directly with you throughout this important and challenging process.

The decisions you make as a Commission will affect the entire nation and much is at stake. We encourage you to engage in this process with a clear vision that both adheres to the Department of Defense BRAC criteria and puts military value first.

We are eager to share with you the enclosed report on the military value of Washington's military installations. This paper was compiled by our offices and serves as our joint message of support for the United States military, and for those who serve in our home state.

Washington State soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are our national treasure. They are serving bravely in Iraq and Afghanistan, and indeed throughout the world. They have recently played a central role with tsunami relief in Southern Asia. We are proud of those who serve, and we are proud of the unique network of capable installations that our state provides in their support.

As you will see, Washington State is a great home for the men and women in our armed forces, now and in the future. Please carefully consider our recommendations as you work through the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process. We look forward to working closely with you.

Sincerely,

*Christine Gregoire*  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

*Patty Murray*  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

*Maria Cantwell*  
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

*Norm Dicks*  
Norm Dicks  
Member of Congress

*Jim McDermott*  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

*Doc Hastings*  
Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress

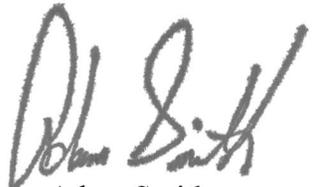
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Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress



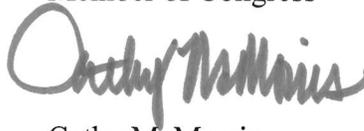
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Brian Baird  
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris  
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Report on the  
Military Value of  
Washington State Military  
Installations

*Developed by*  
*The Washington State Congressional Delegation,*  
*The Office of the Governor*  
*and Communities*

# **Report on the Military Value of Washington State Military Installations**

**Developed by the Washington State Congressional Delegation**

The Washington State Governor's office and local military communities have joined together over the last year to compile a comprehensive message outlining the enthusiastic support that our communities have for our military bases. These reports emphasized the economic impact that bases have on the statewide and local economies, and touched on the strong state-military relationship that has been built upon over decades.

This white paper is designed to focus specifically on the military value of Washington state bases both today and in the future. The Washington State Congressional Delegation actively supports our bases. Our bases are at the forefront of our nation's defense and are uniquely suited to become a model for our military in the years to come.

## **Military bases in the Northwest are strategically vital to our national defense.**

The Northwest is home to a number of military assets with joint potential that are flexible, are prepared to fight at a moment's notice, and are located in a strategic region with easy access to the Pacific Theater. The Washington state region provides for asset dispersal, allowing the DOD more protection against asymmetric and other military threats and attacks such as weapons of mass destruction and cruise/ballistic missiles.

Washington state's brave men and women have been a central component of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Over 6,000 active-duty troops based at Fort Lewis along with almost 4,000 National Guardsmen from the state have fought in Iraq. Also, over 2,000 Washington state based airmen and women have been involved in air refueling and transport operations in Iraq. Finally, Washington state based sailors stationed on the USS Lincoln took charge in sea based relief efforts for South Asian tsunami victims, quickly delivering over six million pounds of relief supplies and equipment. This was an amazing example of the flexibility of our military and of the assets we hold in Washington state.

While these accomplishments show the unique assets in Washington state today, tomorrow and over the next 20 years the United States security relationships in the Pacific Theater will consume much of our attention. Today, United States foreign and military policy are focused on Middle East issues such as Iraq, Iran and the Israel-Palestinian peace process. These issues are important, yet certain facts dictate a renewed focus on Asia.

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) stated that “Asia is gradually emerging as a region susceptible to large-scale military competition. The governments of some of these states are vulnerable to overthrow...Many of these states field large militaries and possess the potential to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction. The possibility exists that a military competitor with a formidable resource base will emerge in the region.” The report continues, **“The density of U.S. basing and en route infrastructure is lower than in other critical regions. The United States also has less assurance of access to facilities in the region.”** The QDR exemplifies the importance of Northwest military installations and their ability to provide the military with a strategic location to move assets to the Pacific region and the rest of the world very quickly.

The United States and the Asia Pacific region account for 60 percent of the world’s gross domestic product. The Asia Pacific region has several of the world’s largest ports measured both by volume and number of containers, including Singapore and Shanghai. The Asia Pacific has 60 percent of the world’s population.

Given the Pacific Northwest’s location as an economic gateway to Asia and the political, economic and diplomatic interests the United States has in the region, it is vital that we are able to address Pacific Theater security issues. For these reasons it is essential that the military maintain a robust presence in the Northwest overlooking the Pacific. **Therefore, Washington state should become the staging ground of our future military in support of security and humanitarian efforts in the Pacific and around the world.**

## **Pacific Northwest Military Assets**

There is no better region of interdependent, flexible and strategic facilities than those of Washington state. Our bases provide the best possible staging ground for operations both in the Pacific and around the world.

- ✓ Washington state has tremendous surge capacity. Because our state has unique installations, our men and women can mobilize more quickly.
- ✓ Washington state has a superior training and operating environment for both land, sea and air operations.
- ✓ Washington state provides a secure and protected staging area for our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.
- ✓ Washington state has the best quality of life in the nation for the men and women of the Armed Forces.

The Pacific Northwest has the ideal training environment to create an integrated, joint fighting force. Our bases are near enough to each other to create a strong joint operations and training environment. They are also situated in geographic locations that will enhance protection from a terrorist or military attack.

## **The Future of the Armed Forces**

As our nation faces the growing threat of international terrorism, our military is transforming itself to confront these new threats. Published reports have indicated that in the upcoming QDR, the Pentagon will focus its mission on emerging threats such as insurgencies, terrorist networks and failed states. This new focus will drive the development of our nation's defense technologies and platforms. Washington state is the ideal staging ground for these new capabilities.

- ✓ Washington state has the perfect training and operations area for new technologies such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, fast littoral combat ships, and rapidly deployable army brigades.
- ✓ Washington state has some of the newest and most modern facilities for our Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.
- ✓ Washington state faces the Pacific Theater, allowing for easy and rapid deployment to areas of future military interest.

The Pacific Northwest harbors unique assets that are not found in other areas of the country. We have the most modern naval facilities in the world, the most active heavy airlift facility on the West Coast, the home of the Army Stryker Brigade and our Army rapid deployment forces, and the Navy's primary West Coast naval shipyard.

## **Our Military Assets**

On land, in the air, and at sea, the Pacific Northwest Region has the space and the geography to provide the best possible home and training environment for the men and women of the Armed Forces today and tomorrow. *This list is not an exhaustive list of all of the missions at our military installations and is only meant to be a representative list.*

### **Air**

- The close proximity of a variety of Military Operating Areas (MOAs), Offshore Warning Areas, Targets and irreplaceable Low Level Training Routes for aircraft create an unparalleled training environment and ideal location for joint operations and exercises which are unencumbered by civilian and commercial air operations.
- The close proximity of McChord Air Force base to Fort Lewis allows for the close coordination of logistics and force movements, and provides staging for Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps tactical aircraft in support of joint operations such as Close Air Support, Counter-Air and Strike/Interdiction missions.
- Fairchild Air Force Base provides an optimum location to train air-refueling crews and to provide air-refueling to Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps tactical

aircraft during joint operations and exercises. Fairchild AFB houses the only active duty air-refueling wing on the West Coast; and since the attacks in September of 2001, Fairchild's tanker mission has expanded to meet an important need in the Global War on Terror, supporting all three campaigns (ONE, OEF, OIF). Over 107 million gallons of fuel have been off loaded and more than 53 million gallons of fuel have been consumed. Fairchild AFB has 15 air-refueling routes within 100 nautical miles of the facility that do not encroach on large urban centers.

- Fairchild AFB is home to the 336<sup>th</sup> Training Group that controls all Air Force survival schools, training 3,500 students each year on one million acres of dedicated land. It is also home to 20 units representing the Air Force, the Air National Guard, US Joint Forces Command and plans are in the process for the Army Reserve Command to relocate to the base.
- NAS Whidbey provides the best possible unencumbered electronic air warfare training environment for all of the services, including Navy, Marines, and U.S. Air Force. The EA-6B Prowler and its follow on, the EA-18G have a mission which is indispensable to the successful completion of any joint tactical air combat operation. This is a capability unmatched in any other location in the United States.
- NAS Whidbey Island is also home to Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 10 and, along with the Bangor Submarine Base, provides optimal support, air space and targets for the P-3 and EP-3 aircraft missions of Anti-Submarine Warfare and various types of Reconnaissance.

## Sea

- The Puget Sound region provides an excellent environment for both open-ocean and littoral sea operations training.
- Puget Sound Naval stations include deepwater ports whose piers are certified for nuclear ships. Naval Station Everett, for example, provides unencumbered protected and direct access to the Pacific Theater for the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and numerous surface combatant ships.
- Naval Base Kitsap includes Naval Station Bremerton, the Navy's principal shipyard on the West Coast and homeport to numerous naval ships including the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis, and Bangor Naval Submarine Base, the Navy's primary submarine homeport on the West Coast.
- Naval Station Everett is the newest homeport in the Navy and is perfectly suited to support some of our Navy's newest assets such as the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) the DD(X) as well as new aircraft carriers.

- Bangor Submarine Base and Keyport Undersea Warfare Center have superior capability for undersea operations training and, along with the P-3 wing at NAS Whidbey Island, can support Anti-Submarine Warfare exercises and operations.

## **Land**

- Fort Lewis is home to the Stryker Brigade, the most modern rapid deployment force in the world. The Stryker Brigade is currently at the forefront of operations in Iraq and has played an integral role in securing the country.
- Fort Lewis is the home of I Corps. I Corps is one of 15 U.S. power projection platforms and focuses specifically on the Pacific Rim.
- Army ground forces stationed at Fort Lewis have large training areas both on base and at the Yakima Training Range in Eastern Washington. The Yakima Training Range is one of the only training sites that provides for training ordnance delivery and also allows delivery of live ordnance, such as air-to-surface and surface-to-surface weapons. This provides great joint training and operations opportunities with the Army, Navy air and Air Force as well as Air National Guard and Marine Corps tactical air.

## **Summary**

Washington state is truly fortunate to host such important components of our nation's defense. The opportunities that our military has in the state are limitless, particularly in the forms of joint operations, exercises and training. I hope that we have helped you feel as strongly about our military assets as we do, particularly for the military value that our bases have, the joint operations and training capability that our bases provide, and the highest quality of life that Washington state provides for the men and women of the armed forces.