

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

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Dear Commissioners,

26 May 2005

I write this letter from a personal perspective. I am negatively affected by the proposal of the BRAC relative to page 272 of the proposal; **Consolidate Media Organizations into a New Agency for Media and Publications**. My consequences aren't unlike anyone else's similarly affected so I won't labor details of the impending hardship. You've no doubt had a lot of the emotional content and I've found that kind of appeal has no place in a decision based upon strategic planning and economics.

I am writing this letter because there is no one to champion our concern. We are such a small piece of the pie that it is unlikely that anyone will ask any questions about whether the proposal really makes a substantial case based upon the facts.

I took the time to review the proposal and the criteria from the mission perspective. Some of it makes theoretical sense and some of it doesn't.

The decision falls far short of the mark and represents a fiscal misdirection under item four, Military Value –one of the four primary criteria affecting this proposal. Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County has a significantly higher personal cost of living and also requires a higher supplement to both military and civilian pay when compared to the rest of the US supplement. An intent of the consolidation seems obvious...to economize on staff to perform the mission. Though a degree of this outcome is lost economically when you have to pay the people who are doing the mission more to account for the higher cost of living. In my particular case as a GS-11 step 1 working in San Antonio, I would be entitled to \$1,927 more per year based upon nothing more than where I might work –Fort Meade. This one objective has placed at odds two economic considerations. It would be possible to achieve both of these manpower/cost issues by a more practical choice in geography.

On a subjective level, the Air Force News Agency relies on a sizeable junior(GS-9 and below) civilian staff. These team members, particularly at the GS-5 level, perform critical functions that get our products to the troops and civilian media. Our operations have enjoyed a stable workforce over many years due primarily to the low cost of living in San Antonio. Most that leave the organization do so at retirement, rather than out of a sense for stepping stones to secure an economic survival. One can actually raise a family on GS-5 pay in San Antonio. Comparatively, the median income for Bexar County (where San Antonio is located) is \$38,328. The median income in Anne Arundel County (where Fort Meade is located) is 61,768. This is a sizeable deficit that can only be overcome by using the job as a stepping stone to higher pay grades. Though I don't have any statistical proof of such, it's my understanding from anecdotal evidence that the GS-11 and below workforce is largely transitory. I don't think that it's beyond the pale to

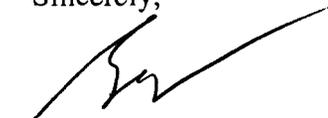
suggest that it may not even be possible to higher a minimally qualified, stable workforce at the GS-5 level around Fort Meade. The suppositions in this scenario are that you increase the grade to make the job more attractive to recruiting or that you significantly lower the standard for acceptable work in order to attract candidates. One path leads you to higher operational costs, the other to production difficulty. Again, geography creates an operational difficulty.

There is as well a personal price in the choice of consolidating like missions at Fort Meade. Much of our civilian workforce at the Air Force News Agency is stable. They, at all grade levels, represent the brain trust of the operation. Whether they will move with the mission, assuming that the proposal includes maintaining the mission and not just strip mining the assets, remains to be seen.

The cost and other BRAC consideration criteria can be greatly enhanced by locating this operation in San Antonio. We have three large military installations that have plenty of real estate. At one time, the Air Force News Agency was invited to move onto Lackland Air Force Base. I am proposing that if the consolidation is inevitable through BRAC action that someone at least put forth the effort to examine if the choice of Fort Meade makes economical sense. Maybe the answer won't be San Antonio but another lower cost area. If people are going to be moved, they may not be happy about it but it's far less traumatic if they are not immediately faced with a financial burden.

I thank you for the opportunity to become a part of the process.

Sincerely,



Gerry Proctor

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Alexandria, VA 22309  
27 June 2005

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The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to you and your committee concerning the BRAC recommendations for the 2005 list, specifically the **Consolidate Media Organizations Into a New Agency for Media and Publications at Fort Meade, Maryland, Headquarters and Support Activity Joint Cross Service Group (H&SA-30)**. As one of the persons that could be affected by the consolidation, I am concerned that this action will end up costing the government more not only in capital expenditures but will hinder the ability of the Army, Air Force, and Navy leadership to communicate directly to their service members and civilians directly through print, television, and other multi-media sources and at the same time could reduce the ability of the Overseas Commanders-in Chiefs and Garrison commanders to communicate effectively to their troops directly if overseas American Forces Radio and Television stations are consolidated or eliminated.

I have been involved with the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) since 1985, working in the USSOUTHCOM Area for the Southern Command Network, with the Television-Audio Support Activity which until recently was a subordinate unit of Headquarters, American Forces Radio and Television Service, and currently as an employee of the Army Headquarters element of AFRTS, Army Broadcasting Service located in leased space at 601 North Fairfax Street in Alexandria, Virginia serving as a Staff Engineer. Since 1985 the subject of consolidation of AFRTS has come up every few years so this is not a new subject or concept. I am currently working on the facility design for the Soldiers Media Center among other projects in which all of the Army Media Activities are to be consolidated into one facility. I am also working on the facility renovation for the Soldiers Media Center (SMC) Logistics Facility located in Bldg 190 on Fort Belvoir, Virginia. I am a currently a resident of the 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County, Virginia.

In reference to the Soldiers Media Center (SMC) mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Office of the Chief of Army Public Affairs (OCA) has been working on consolidating all Army media functions under the auspices of Headquarters Department of the Army into the SMC which was planned for construction at Fort Belvoir, Virginia sometime after FY 2007 (it is currently on hold during the BRAC proceedings). We are in the process of implementing Phase I of this move into temporary leased space in the Taylor Building located in Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia. I am personally involved with the design and layout of this facility as well as the proposed facility at Fort Belvoir (Phase I has to be implemented because the building which currently houses Soldiers Radio and Television at 2320 Mill Road in Alexandria, Virginia is due to be torn down in February 2006 by the building owner). This facility is designed to be a one-stop media source for the Army as well as act as an alternate Public Affairs Emergency Operations Center in case of attack or natural disaster at the Pentagon. The design is such that we will be able to share resources throughout not only the Army Public Affairs community and Army Staff but with the other Public Affairs agencies throughout the Department of Defense, other Federal Agencies, media outlets and our Military allies using commercial off the shelf systems and distributing them through electronic means whenever possible. We already have a system in place to move media electronically to, from, and between our overseas ABS managed AFRTS outlets and our headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia using existing military communications infrastructure.

All of our overseas subordinate units in Europe, Korea, and Honduras are already manned jointly with Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilians (both US and Local Nationals) working together to provide news and information to service members stationed overseas. In the spirit of Jointness we provide funding and support for 2 Navy only broadcasting stations in Sigonella and La Maddalena Italy. Units are also jointly manned at AFRTS outlets in Japan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, which are managed by Air Force News Agency in San Antonio, Texas. In the spirit of Secretary Rumsfeld and staff's philosophy we are already working jointly and share resources amongst our service Public Affairs activities. The Army and Air Force Hometown News agency has been working together for well over 15 years together to make sure that Soldiers and Airmen can let the folks in their hometowns know how they are doing. It is a system that has been working well for a long time with people who have been committed to being good stewards of the taxpayer's money. As the expression goes, there is no need to re-invent the wheel.

In my personal opinion, my biggest concerns for about the proposed consolidation of Defense Media Activities under Department of Defense Control at Fort Meade Maryland are the following:

1. The majority of the employees working for American Forces Information Service, Navy Broadcasting Service, Soldiers Magazine, Soldiers Radio and Television Service, and Army Broadcasting Service live in Southern Maryland and Northern Virginia. Many people I have talked to that would be affected if the consolidation occurs at Fort Meade will probably leave Government service rather than make the 30-50 mile one way drive every day, especially since there is no effective public transportation options from Northern Virginia or Southern Maryland to Fort Meade. It would make more sense to move these organizations to Fort Belvoir or Quantico Marine Base in Virginia or even to the Walter Reed Campus or Anacostia Naval Annex (where Navy Media Activity is located) in Washington, DC if the consolidation is to be carried out. The same people I have talked to about not wanting to move to Fort Meade would have no problem working at either Fort Belvoir or Quantico since they would be commuting against the flow of traffic and these sites already on their way to their current offices or in the District of Columbia where public transportation is available. The only group that will be affected either way are the folks who work for Air Force News Agency and Army and Air Force Hometown News in San Antonio, Texas who will be forced to move or look for other positions in the San Antonio area. Army Broadcasting Service and Soldiers Magazine already has a presence at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, the Navy is already in Anacostia and there are already support agreements in place with the installations.

2. The consolidation of these activities takes away the capability of the Service Chiefs to communicate directly with their Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines through direct broadcasting and print. With these organizations consolidated under the Department of Defense, their first responsibility will be to the Secretary of Defense first then Service Chiefs. In my own personal experience of 20 years as a Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer in the Army, Soldiers Magazine was something to look forward too every month to learn about new Army doctrine, uniforms, training, and news about what other soldiers were doing around the world, written by Soldiers for Soldiers. Soldiers Radio and Television is set up the same way, news about Soldiers and the Army from the Army point of view. The same goes for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. This would only leave the installation newspapers and the World Wide Web as the only direct source of communications between the Army staff in the Pentagon and troops in the field. That is of course if troops happen to be stationed on an installation where they have a weekly or monthly newspaper or have regular access to the Internet.

3. The myth that consolidating under the Department of Defense control will save money and provide better service to customers. Since I have worked on both sides of the fence (for OSD Public Affairs and the Army) I can tell you in my personal opinion that the Service Media Activities are much better stewards of the

taxpayers money than is the Department of Defense Media activities. Just take a look at the American Forces Information Service which is part of OSD Public Affairs. They have almost the same number of employees as Army Broadcasting Service (To be fair they have more civilians than ABS) but when you compare overhead positions, they have more than 37 in management and support positions where in ABS we only have 18. We use existing Army Headquarters staff and resource management assets to ensure we meet all reporting requirements for the higher headquarters and Congress. The past consolidation of AFRTS services to uplink all programming from Riverside, California to service members overseas and aboard ship has reduced the cost of distributing programming by tape and boosts morale by providing live TV to troops both on land and by sea but at the same time they have cut the amount of time available for messages by Overseas Commanders to get out local information in the programming schedule, information which is important for our service members and civilians working overseas.

4. During the week of June 13<sup>th</sup>, members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Department of Defense met to discuss the consolidation of the military broadcasting services. As of that time there is was no real plan in place for this consolidation. In my personal opinion it seems as if OSD Public Affairs wants to take control of the Military Broadcasting Services and the Service media outlets solely to feed programming to the Pentagon Channel, which in less than 3 years went from a closed circuit feed in the Pentagon to a 24 hour Satellite Channel seen throughout the US on Dish Network and military bases and via the AFRTS satellite network throughout the world. It went from 15 people in 2002 to over 60 people today. I cannot comment on the financial numbers that were presented in the summary of the H&SA because I don't know where they came up with the numbers but in my mind I don't see any cost savings, especially if you factor in the cost in experience that may walk out the door if the consolidation goes through and if it occurs at Fort Meade. Add the fact there is no solid plan in place and this could open up the door for some serious overspending. If you want an example of a consolidation that ended up costing more than it saved, look at the consolidation of the Television-Audio Support Activity when it was moved from Sacramento to Riverside, California. Only 19 people of 64 moved from Sacramento to Riverside and of that only 17 are left. The cost of experience that walked out the door was immeasurable in dollars and cents but as a now as a customer of this agency they are swamped with work and have had to hire contractors in order to keep up with the taskings they have. The contractors while hard workers lack experience and cost a lot more than the civil servants who worked very hard for the US Government and were great stewards of the taxpayers money.

In conclusion, I would hope that before you approve BRAC 2005 that you get all of the information to make an informed decision on not only this small tiny

part of BRAC but of all the recommendations. I support the Secretary of Defense in his move to get people out of leased space that could be subject to terrorist attack by truck bombs or other means and reduce the amount of money paid to landlords so we can get better equipment in the hands of our warfighters, but gradually over time so the local communities can recruit other agencies and businesses to move in and keep local businesses thriving. I even support consolidating activities if it will mean tax savings to the public and better support for our troops but in the case of the Defense Media Activity I do not see the savings published in the BRAC report because over my 20 years working in media for the military each of the military services have been working jointly in their mission of providing news, command information, and entertainment to troops both in and outside the United States with limited budgets and resources.

The work you have been tasked to do affects not only the budget but people as well. I am not only a Retired Soldier and Civil Servant but a taxpayer as well. I feel that if the BRAC committee decides with all of the data that they have in front of them that consolidating the Service Media Activities into one agency is best for the country then I can accept that. I would hope that if the decision of the BRAC committee is to consolidate that they would consider standing up this agency at either Fort Belvoir, Quantico Marine Base, or the District of Columbia instead of Fort Meade, Maryland so as not to lose a lot of great civil servants who work hard to not only serve the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and civilians of our US Armed Forces but also work hard to be good stewards of the taxpayers money.

Thank You for Your Support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. C. Kresge Jr.', with a stylized, cursive script.

James C. Kresge Jr.

Cc: Honorable John Warner, United States Senate  
Honorable George Allen, United States Senate  
Honorable Thomas Davis, United States House of Representatives