

# Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY BIRD

August 14, 2005

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Many On Base-Closings Panel Question Estimate Of Savings

New York Times

Eric Schmitt

August 14, 2005

WASHINGTON- A majority of the members of the independent commission assessing the Pentagon's proposed list of domestic base closings say that the Defense Department probably overstated the nearly \$50 billion in savings projected over 20 years, perhaps by nearly 50 percent.

In interviews this week, eight of the nine members expressed varying degrees of concern about the accuracy of the Pentagon figures, and said they had directed the commission's staff to conduct a separate savings analysis before the commission's final votes on the military's recommendations later this month.

After scores of base visits and public hearings, most of the commission members interviewed

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said they now agreed with a report issued this summer by federal investigators that concluded that nearly half of the Pentagon's projected savings came from cuts in military jobs that, in many cases, would simply be reassigned to other installations.

"I fail to see at this point how you could arrive at the figures they arrived at," said Anthony J. Principi, a former secretary of veterans affairs who is the commission chairman. "We're going through this effort to save money from excess capacity to modernize forces. If the savings aren't there, and it costs money to do this on top of all the economic upheaval, why are we doing this?"

A Pentagon spokesman, Glenn Flood, defended the Defense Department's analysis and said it was preparing a detailed explanation of the projected savings for the commission. "We stand by what we said," Mr. Flood said.

Other defense officials said the Pentagon's projected savings in military personnel cuts would probably be reallocated to new types of military jobs that were more relevant to today's security environment, like operating remotely piloted Predator aircraft.

The commission, whose members include retired military officers and former cabinet members or members of Congress, must submit its findings to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president and Congress have until Nov. 7 to reject or accept the entire package.

Projected savings will be an important factor in the commission's deliberations, although the military value of the proposed changes is the paramount consideration. Nonetheless, 80 percent of the Pentagon's proposed savings come from just 10 percent of the recommendations, including such contentious changes as the proposed closings of Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, the Navy's submarine base in Groton, Conn., and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine.

Commission members say that if they determine that the Pentagon proposals yield smaller

savings than projected, or even cost money over time, that may tip the balance in some of the panel's final votes.

"It will have an impact," said Philip E. Coyle III, a commission member who was the Pentagon's top weapons evaluator for much of the 1990's. "It may be that closures or realignments that were proposed, in part because they would save money, may actually cost money. The whole idea is to save taxpayers money, and if it costs the taxpayers money, I think that would cause the commissioners to have a second look."

Commissioners say it is too early to predict what decisions will emerge from four days of public deliberations that are scheduled to begin on Aug. 24 in Crystal City, Va., just outside Washington. But the panel is nearing the end of a process that could shut, consolidate or realign more than 800 military facilities in all 50 states. Some are well known in military history, including Fort McPherson in Georgia.

The commission said Friday that it had invited Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to testify in a rare Saturday session next week to provide the Pentagon's final comments before the panel begins final deliberations.

Earlier this month, Mr. Bush signaled he would accept the panel's recommendations without objection and send them on to Congress for approval. "In order for the process to be nonpolitical, it's very important to make it clear that the decision of the BRAC will stand, as far as I am concerned," Mr. Bush told reporters, using the acronym for the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

By law, the commission must give priority to the military value of the proposed changes - that is, what would improve the readiness and combat effectiveness of the armed forces. That could include more spacious training areas and the ability to move forces quickly in a crisis.

"The first goal of the BRAC is to improve the war-fighting capability," Maj. Gen. Gary Heckman, co-director of the Air Force's base-

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closing analysis team, told the commission on July 18.

But cost savings have always been an important selling point for the politically divisive base-closing process, which had previous rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Mr. Rumsfeld said the proposed changes under review would save about \$5.5 billion a year, after initial closing costs of \$24 billion were paid, and \$48.8 billion over 20 years. The previous four rounds of base closings saved a total of \$29 billion through 2003, according to the Government Accountability Office. "By making these changes, the American taxpayer benefits," Mr. Rumsfeld told the commission on May 16.

But in a report issued in early July, the accountability office, an investigative arm of Congress, challenged the Pentagon's findings, saying that 47 percent of the projected savings were from cuts in members of the military who in many cases would simply be reassigned to other installations. "This could create a false sense of savings available for other purposes," the report said.

In testimony to the commission on July 18, the head of the office, David M. Walker, the comptroller general, said, "Unless you end up reducing overall head count or the average compensation levels for the applicable positions, there are no net dollar savings for military personnel."

This assessment combined with the commission's own review to this point have left some commission members shaking their heads. "I have a hard time picturing this as a savings unless we're reducing the size of the force, and we're not," said Gen. James T. Hill, a retired Army officer on the panel.

Brig. Gen. Sue E. Turner, a retired Air Force officer and commission member, said, "I think there's still a lot of questions."

Another commissioner, James Hansen, a former Utah congressman, said he was skeptical of both

the Pentagon and G.A.O. analyses. "It's extremely hard to project savings," he said.

The G.A.O.'s analysis and the public skepticism voiced by many commission members have given many states and communities with bases on the chopping block renewed hope they can save their installations.

Massachusetts lawmakers argued this week that it would actually cost nearly \$163 million over the next 20 years to close Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod, not save \$336 million over that time, as the Pentagon claims. The new figures, offered by the Massachusetts National Guard, contend that the Pentagon counted savings from jobs that would not be eliminated and did not take into account retraining costs.

Gov. Michael F. Easley of North Carolina, a Democrat, expressed concern this month about whether the proposal to turn Pope Air Force Base over to the Army would yield the projected \$197 million in annual savings.

The Pentagon's savings estimates have come under such fire that some commissioners say they will not rely on them. "The final decisions won't be unduly influenced by the Defense Department estimates because we'll do our own," said Samuel K. Skinner, a commission member who is a former chief of staff to the first President Bush.

In the end, commission members say they will have to carefully balance the military necessity of the proposed changes against other considerations, including savings.

"Military value trumps everything," said Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., a retired Navy officer on the panel. "It's very likely that we'll support a Defense Department recommendation even if it couldn't demonstrate the payback, if we were absolutely convinced the military value was significant. But the burden of proof would be on them."

### **BRAC lawyer raises questions about base recommendations**

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
Tom Parsons  
August 13, 2005

A lawyer for the federal commission that will make final recommendations to Congress on military base closings and expansions is questioning whether it is appropriate for the panel to make specific recommendations on where to place aircraft or personnel.

Citing examples that include additions at Little Rock Air Force Base, the lawyer says in a memorandum released Friday that the Pentagon recommendations, if written into law, might hinder the military's future management of its installations.

Dan Cowhig, deputy general counsel for the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, also says some proposals might not need to go through the costly base-realignment process.

Under the Base Closure Act of 1990, the commission is to make final recommendations to Congress, which then must either accept or reject the proposal in its entirety. Acceptance of the BRAC recommendations would result in a federal law.

Cowhig said the result could be "the creation of a statutory requirement to base certain aircraft in specific locations," for instance.

To illustrate his point, he cites a Pentagon recommendation to move eight C-130H cargo aircraft from Niagara Falls, N.Y., to the Little Rock Air Force Base and move other aircraft at Niagara Falls to other bases. In all, the Arkansas air base would get 74 C-130s from other bases and gain 3,898 people.

But legislating such specifics "will place significant constraints on the future operations of the Air Force," he said in the memo.

Cowhig noted that the previous BRAC commission, in 1995, removed "similar mandatory language ... (that was) considerably less detailed."

Also in the July 14 memo, Cowhig said the recommendations might exceed the authority granted the commission under the 1990 law and he raised the possibility that some of the proposed changes could be carried out by the Pentagon without going through the expensive and time-consuming base-realignment process.

The memo said several of the Pentagon recommendations "do not contain a single element that would require the authority of the Base Closure Act," citing as an illustration a recommendation to move four C-130 aircraft from Schenectady, N.Y., to the Arkansas air base.

The memo cites the move of the eight C-130H's from Niagara Falls to Arkansas, as well as recommended relocation of eight KC-135R refueling tankers from Niagara Falls to Bangor, Maine, and the retirement of eight KC-135E aircraft.

"The Department of Defense does not require the authority of the (Base Closure) Act to move groups of eight aircraft, or retire groups of eight aircraft," the memo said. "The time and resource-intensive process required by the Base Closure Act is not necessary to implement these actions. The Air Force could carry out these actions on its own existing authority."

The memo apparently was intended to alert commission members to matters "that are of legal and policy concern to the commission" as members decide what the final recommendations will be.

Other questions raised dealt with use of the BRAC process to make changes in how a unit is equipped or organized; changes to the organization or location of an Air National Guard unit; retiring aircraft "whose retirement has been barred by statute"; and the transfer of aircraft from one state's Air Guard to the Air Guard of another state.

Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., had no comment on the memo because she hasn't seen it yet, a spokeswoman for her office said Saturday. Sen. Mark Pryor and Rep. Vic Snyder, both D-Ark.,

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could not be reached for comment. Snyder's district includes the Little Rock air base.

**Pentagon backed on Guard bases  
Governors have no say, Justice Department finds**

Copley News Service  
Otto Kreisher  
August 13, 2005

WASHINGTON - In a potentially painful setback for dozens of states, including Illinois, the U.S. Justice Department has found that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission has the authority to recommend changes in National Guard units without the permission of state governors.

The legal opinion states that the commission the freedom to use its own judgment in deciding the fate of 29 Air National Guard installations across the nation that would lose their flying units in a sweeping consolidation of Air Force-controlled aircraft.

Units that would lose aircraft include the 183rd Fighter Wing at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield. The Air Force proposal would move 15 F-16 fighters and 163 Air Guard positions from Springfield to another Guard unit at Fort Wayne, Ind.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich is one of three state executives who have filed suits in federal courts seeking to block the removal of Air Guard planes, arguing that federal laws require governors' approval for such actions.

The opinion from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, however, said the BRAC law establishes power over the National Guard that is unaffected by two other statutes that require governors to approve any changes to Guard units in their states.

That finding was echoed by a separate opinion the commission sought from a prominent Washington law firm.

The Justice Department noted that previous closure rounds have closed or adjusted Guard installations without seeking the affected governors' permission.

"As an initial matter, the authority and procedures of the Base Closure Act undoubtedly do extend to National Guard installations, just as they do to any other type of military installation under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense," the opinion stated.

In defining military facilities covered by the BRAC law, "the act makes no distinction between installations associated with the National Guard and those associated with any other component of the Armed Forces," it said.

The counsel's office also noted that all the Guard units affected by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's recommendations, which the commission is considering, are located on land either owned or leased by the Defense Department.

"Such installations are included within the definition of 'military installations' (in the BRAC law) and are thus presumptively subject to closure and realignment under the act," the counsel said.

The opinion said the closure law makes no distinction between active, Guard and reserve units in its description of realignment.

"It is therefore not surprising that in previous (BRAC) rounds both the (Defense) Secretary and the Commission made recommendations to close or realign National Guard installations, or that the Secretary has made such recommendations in the current round."

The opinion addressed the two separate statutes cited by Blagojevich and the other governors and concluded that "neither affects the exercise of authority under the Base Closure Act."

The separate opinion by the law firm Wiley, Rein and Fielding makes similar findings.

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“A reading of the text, history and application of the BRAC statute confirms that its scope includes installations relating to the National Guard, and that it authorizes not only the realignment and closure of such installations but the associated relocation or change to National Guard equipment, headquarters, units and/or missions,” the opinion signed by Fred Fielding said.

When told Thursday that the Justice Department had issued its opinion, Blagojevich insisted that the state has “a solid legal case.” He said he will continue to fight to keep the Air Guard’s F-16s in Springfield.

The opinions ratifying the BRAC commission’s power over the Guard were expected by most experts on the base-closure process.

The BRAC law, first enacted in 1988, was intended to override a host of laws and administrative requirements that had prevented the Pentagon from closing any major facility for a decade.

The law specifically nullifies requirements for environmental impact studies and congressional approval and other laws and sharply limits the power of any protesting party to go to the courts to block an approved BRAC action.

Federal courts have upheld those provisions in the past.

Even before he released the Justice Department’s opinions, commission chairman Anthony Principi said the panel intended to act on the recommendations affecting the Guard units.

But Principi and several of the eight other commissioners have expressed concern about the proposed realignment of Air Guard activities, particularly moves that would leave large sections of the country without fighter aircraft that could respond quickly to an airborne threat.

With the movement of F-16s from Springfield and Air Guard F-15s from St. Louis, neither state would have locally based fighters.

The commission intends to decide on Rumsfeld’s recommendations during public sessions Aug. 24-27. The panel’s findings must be presented to President Bush by Sept. 8.

The president then will have until Sept. 23 to approve or reject the commission’s recommendations in total. He cannot change them.

If the president approves them, the recommendations go to Congress, which can block them only if both chambers pass resolutions of disapproval.

That did not happen in any of the four previous rounds of base closings.

### **Panel's decision on recommended fate of Northwest bases this month**

Gannett News Service

Ellyn Ferguson

August 13, 2005

WASHINGTON -- People in the Pacific Northwest will learn this month if members of an independent commission believe Pentagon recommendations to move Air National Guard planes from Portland International Airport and other locations would weaken homeland security.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission could start voting Aug. 24 on the Pentagon's proposal to close 33 major military bases and restructure 29 other installations. The Air Guard recommendations are part of the package.

When the nine-member panel votes, it could choose to scrap all Air Guard recommendations, back all the recommendations, or decide the merit of each recommendation individually.

At a Thursday hearing, commission members expressed concern that the recommendations to shift planes from Air Guard wings would leave

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some states with inadequate homeland security in the air. Commissioners James Bilbray and Phillip Coyle zeroed in on the recommendation to move all 15 F-15 fighter jets from the Air Guard base at Portland International Airport.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski, D-Ore., has threatened to sue the federal government if the Air Guard planes and personnel are moved. Gov. Christine Gregoire, D-Wash., has raised concerns about homeland security for the region if Portland's jets are moved.

Col. Mike Caldwell, Oregon National Guard spokesman, said he was heartened as he watched C-SPAN to see Bilbray and Coyle raise points that Oregon political and military leaders have raised. But Caldwell said it still is unclear what action the commission will take.

"I didn't see any signs that told me, 'That saved our bacon,'" Caldwell said.

Although the panel questioned the Air Force recommendations, they seemed equally doubtful of a counterproposal by state Guard leaders that would reject most of the Air Force recommendations.

At the most recent BRAC hearing, Adm. Timothy J. Keating, head of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Northern Command, said the recommendations had been made after determining that they "do not create an unacceptable risk."

Keating and Peter F. Verga, a high-ranking homeland defense official in the Defense Department, said concentrating planes at fewer locations still would allow for quick response.

"I can get my hands on hundreds of fighters on pretty short notice," Keating said.

But Bilbray noted that if all the planes were moved from Portland, the closest airbases with fighter jets available to the Pacific Northwest would be at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho or Fresno, Calif.

That would create "a big, big gap in the defense of the United States ... because those bases are so far from the Pacific Northwest," Bilbray said. "I think it's actual fact that our national defense is being hampered by the proposals of the Department of Air Force."

### Local News Articles

#### **Branford developer announces plan for Groton submarine base**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Old Saybrook, CT)  
August 13, 2005

A Branford developer has announced plans to buy the Groton submarine base if it closes and turn it into a resort with condominiums, a hotel, a golf course and cruise ship piers.

David Monaco, who announced his \$350 million plan Friday at the marina where he docks his boat, said he would prefer to see the base remain open.

The Pentagon wants to shut it down, a recommendation the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission is reviewing. The commission has until next month to send its report to President Bush.

"I don't want the base to close," Monaco said. "I'm not out to sabotage the efforts to keep it open. But I offer my idea so that people realize that something good can come from change. People should look on the bright side."

A spokesman for Gov. M. Jodi Rell said she is committed to keeping the base on the Thames River open.

"The governor is always glad to hear anyone's ideas and is always open to suggestions," said spokesman Rich Harris. "However, having said that, it should be crystal clear to everyone that our focus is that this property should be developed as a U.S. Navy submarine base."

Monaco said he has developed projects in Newtown, Lisbon, East Windsor and other areas

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of Connecticut. But he acknowledged the project he announced Friday would be by far the biggest he has tackled.

His plan calls for an 18-hole golf course, a 36-story hotel, a 200-unit apartment building for adults over 55, a 400-slip marina and yacht club, a retail center and two piers for cruise ships.

He said it would employ 1,700 people in the summer and 650 in the off-season.

State officials estimate the closing of the base, combined with its impact on submarine builder Electric Boat, could cost 31,500 jobs and deal a \$3.3 billion blow to the state's economy.

Monaco said he would buy the land the base sits on, but only if the base closes and the federal government cleans up any contamination.

Harris pointed out that the property would revert to the state if the federal government were to close the base.

### **BRAC Panel Draws Warner's Fire By Giving Florida A Forum**

Daily Press (Newport News, VA)  
August 13, 2005

On Aug. 20, officials will be able to lobby for the reopening of a Florida base over Oceana.

The BRAC Commission, which is examining alternatives to Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, has angered Virginia's senior senator by scheduling a hearing to allow Florida to make its case for transferring Oceana's jets and jobs.

Florida is offering Cecil Field as an alternative to Oceana. Commissioners recently toured the base, which was closed by a previous BRAC Commission in 1993.

But Sen. John Warner has challenged the hearing scheduled for Aug. 20. "I find the announced additional hearings inconsistent with the straightforward assessment of the military value of Oceana in sworn testimony by the Chief

of Naval Operations, Admiral Mullens, to the commission," Warner said.

"I am also concerned that the commission, having taken actions to request plans from local communities, and now scheduling a hearing for the state of Florida to present its plans, appears to stand in violation" of the act that created BRAC.

In Florida, Gov. Jeb Bush and the mayor of Jacksonville, John Peyton, said they would do and spend whatever it took to open Cecil Field again and make it the new East Coast Master Jet Base.

Texas has also offered \$365 million in incentives to relocate Oceana's planes to the South Texas Coastal Bend region, where Naval Stations Corpus Christi, Ingleside and Kingsville are located. Naval Station Ingleside is on the BRAC Commission list for possible closure. Originally scheduled to be a part of the Aug. 20 hearing, Texas is no longer a participant.

The commission's scheduling of the Aug. 20 hearing occurs after the commission recently announced that it completed visits to all bases on the BRAC list.

It also occurs just days before the commission is expected to vote on its final recommendations for base closings and realignments -- which are due to the president and Congress by Sept. 8.

NAS Oceana, spared from the Pentagon's original list of possible base closures, was added by the BRAC Commission over concerns encroachment around the base was creating safety concerns and negatively affecting training.

### **State Calls Closing Base Too Costly New analysis says move would cost Navy \$641M over 20 years**

New London Day (New London, CT)  
Robert A. Hamilton  
August 14, 2005

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The state has prepared a new analysis that says it will cost the Navy \$641 million over 20 years to close the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, not save \$1.6 billion as the Defense Department has projected.

By the state's calculations, the payback period on the closure will stretch from the three years estimated by the Navy to more than 100 years.

Earlier state analyses challenged the projections of savings that closing the base might generate, but the newest review of the Pentagon proposal is updated with estimates refined over the last several weeks.

The Navy estimates it would cost \$680 million to close the base; the state estimate is \$1.1 billion, including environmental cleanup that the state contends the Navy has seriously underestimated. The Pentagon plan says the Navy would save \$192 million a year if the base is closed; the state analysis puts the number at \$34.6 million.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell said the documentation provides "clear, persuasive and compelling" arguments for the federal base closure commission to overturn the Pentagon recommendation during its deliberations next week.

The analysis, and a letter to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission signed by Rell and all seven members of the state's congressional delegation, was publicly released today.

"'Team Connecticut' has put together an air-tight case for saving our submarine base," Rell said in a statement. "Point by point, on issue after issue, we have been able to refute every argument for closing the base.

"Closing the world's premier submarine base makes no sense — from a military, environmental or common-sense point of view," Rell continued. "I am confident that the Commission will heed our arguments."

"We have shown the BRAC (base realignment and closure) Commission that the Navy used flawed data in a flawed process to make a flawed recommendation," said U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District. "Destroying the center of submarine excellence threatens our national security, weakens our submarine force, and does not provide cost savings to the Navy."

Report too late?

The question is whether the additional information comes too late, because the commission is under such a tight schedule. Its staff is already into the process of preparing its own analysis of the Pentagon plan, and the commission is slated to vote Aug. 24-27.

Simmons, however, said the Pentagon is to blame for the late submission, because for weeks after releasing its recommendations on May 13 it refused to release most of the data used to support them.

The team working on the analysis was running the information through a computer model right up through last week, Simmons said.

"The Department of Defense had two years and \$1 billion to develop its case, and we've had two months and \$1 million to fight it," Simmons said. "I would be very, very upset if someone said this information was a day late. There is no such thing as a day late, as long as the commission has not voted."

Congressional sources said Rell, Simmons, U.S. Sens. Christopher J. Dodd and Joseph I. Lieberman, and other members of the state delegation are using their network of contacts to make sure that each member of the commission learns of the package.

"The amount of data that we've submitted to the BRAC Commission may be large, but when you boil it all down, it's simple," said Dodd. "It doesn't make sense to throw this facility overboard from a national security perspective. And it doesn't make sense for the American taxpayer, whose hard earned dollars support our nation's defense.

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“In effect, by closing the base we would be draining valuable dollars from our national defense, not returning extra dollars to our national defense as was intended by the BRAC process,” said Lieberman. “Given this overwhelming evidence, I am hopeful the BRAC Commission will make the right decision and preserve this critical asset.”

John C. Markowicz, chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition, a grass-roots group fighting to save the base, said over the last few weeks the coalition has supervised two concurrent reviews of the Navy numbers.

Coalition members Gabe Stern and Hank Teskey used the same COBRA (Cost of Base Realignment Activity) computer model that the Pentagon used to justify its base realignment and closure or BRAC recommendations, but adjusted the data to reflect shortcomings it has found in the initial Navy review.

Stern and Teskey went through the computer model line by line and reported they found numerous discrepancies. For instance, under the closure plan, the Naval Submarine School would be moved to Kings Bay, Ga., but the Navy did not have specific construction numbers for 12 of the 13 building projects in the COBRA model, so the computer went to “default” values, which understated the cost of the specialized construction that would be needed.

The coalition also showed that the estimate of the number of positions that would be eliminated by closing Groton was vastly overstated, a finding that the Government Accountability Office supported in its report last month.

Because the Navy would move Groton's submarines to Kings Bay and Norfolk, Va., most of the support jobs eliminated in Groton would have to go to those bases to support the submarines there.

Instead of 1,560 jobs being eliminated with the closure, the state analysis shows a savings of just 777 positions.

Markowicz said the coalition got firmer estimates for the cost of the construction — \$325 per square foot for classroom space, for instance, instead of the \$212 per square foot for the COBRA default value — and plugged it in.

Many of the line items did not change from the Pentagon proposal, and in some small instances the coalition review shows the Navy might have underestimated its savings — for instance, future moving costs showed a savings of \$9.61 million a year, up from \$8.8 million a year in the Navy plan, to reflect more positions being moved to the new bases.

“The adjustments were consistently conservative,” Markowicz said. “We were very deliberate in trying to understand how the Navy came up with savings and costs, and where the costs were COBRA defaults, we tried to look for the real numbers. There are no exaggerations in here.”

At the same time, Markowicz said he did a line-by-line analysis of the Navy plan by hand, again using published, credible sources for things such as construction costs; his results came out to within a few percent of the COBRA run that Teskey and Stern finished last week.

And Markowicz noted that the coalition learned only this week of an internal Navy memorandum written more than a month ago that showed areas where the costs of construction for the Sub School in Kings Bay were understated.

“We haven't figured out a way to quantify them, so we didn't include any costs,” Markowicz said. “That's going to boost the costs even more.”

### **Area gets ready for decision**

BRAC to announce fate of RRAD, LSAAP in about two weeks  
 Texarkana Gazette (Texarkana, TX)  
 Aaron Brand  
 August 13, 2005

At J.C. Trout Furniture in Hooks, Danny Trout maintains a family-owned business that's been on Main Street for 55 years.

With locals fighting to save both local military defense bases Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant and Red River Army Depot, he senses that the community, which was literally built around those bases, has a good feeling as the fight against base closure continues.

At his church, the bases have been on their prayer list. He does not worry, but he does pray for them.

"I've heard a lot of positive attitudes out of a lot of people," Trout said. "That's just the sense that I'm getting out of them when they're talking. Of course, they may be praying, too."

And optimism in the face of a momentous decision is what local officials encourage as the potential fate of the area's defense complex will soon be announced.

In about two weeks, the Texarkana area should know the recommendation from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission for Red River and Lone Star.

The BRAC Commission will conduct open meetings Aug. 24-27 to deliberate and vote on recommendations for base closures and realignments. Sept. 8 is the deadline to send a final list to President Bush.

"We need to be prepared for a decision that can fall anywhere in the spectrum of possibilities," said Texarkana, Ark., Mayor Horace Shipp, who said he's hopeful about a positive outcome.

"Now, like '95, I'm anticipating that facts and good judgment prevail," he said. "And personally, I anticipate a favorable outcome, maybe not exactly as we want it but I anticipate an outcome that by far is a good outcome for us as a community and for the Department of Defense. I'm anxious for that day ..."

Texarkana, Texas, Mayor James Bramlett said the community has done well showing the military value of RRAD and LSAAP.

"Through all the visits and all the public participation we sold ourselves as best as we can and we've got to keep a positive outlook and be hopeful that they (the BRAC commissioners) have all they need to take us off that list," Bramlett said.

He said he was able to meet and talk with some commissioners during the San Antonio regional hearing and came away feeling comfortable and positive about that experience and the site visits.

"I really feel good about the interaction that we've had with them," Bramlett said, noting the site visits gave commissioners firsthand knowledge of the military value.

"That's something they didn't know until they set foot out here ..." he said, adding that it's one thing to see the value on paper but another to see it in person.

"We need to stay positive," Bramlett said.

Shipp said it's understandable the community will be anxious for the decision.

"I don't think this will be too much unlike '95 in that in those last few days we're going to get anxious about the situation because of the significance of the situation," he said.

Shipp said the BRAC Commission decision will hopefully be viewable on C-SPAN, where several commission meetings have been aired.

"We're going to see a process that involves a lot of facts, people's judgments and maybe even some politics," he said, adding that because it's a decision made by people, any outcome is possible.

"I feel it will be good but that does not necessarily mean that's the way it turns out ... it's going to come down to the judgment of nine different people and that's hard to predict," Shipp said.

He said the community should remain ready to show its support in the time before the decision is rendered.

"I still think that you've got to be prepared for another visit if it comes," Shipp said. "And if we do get another visit it could be the most significant of all of them."

Century Bank's John Jarvis, who has been on loan to help the BRAC fight, called the work to save RRAD and LSAAP "one of the most dynamic situations that I have seen."

"The effort to continue to get it (the defense complex) off the list has been steadfast, and we cannot back off ..." Jarvis said.

He said those involved in the fight are working hourly to stay on top of BRAC matters before the decision arrives, such as examining the responses from other communities who stand to gain RRAD and LSAAP work.

"I feel very optimistic about it," Jarvis said. "Of course that's just my nature ... I just really feel that we're doing real well as far as within the BRAC Commission."

And despite the uncertainty, he recommends that people also maintain a forward-thinking outlook.

"Again, I think our community should not worry and should not slow in their ventures of expanding their businesses, of taking care of what they need to do in their own lives in what they're planning to do in Texarkana," Jarvis said.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

#### **Navy skipped homework in recommending Groton be listed for shutdown**

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)  
Ray Hackett  
August 14, 2005

When I visited Kings Bay submarine base in mid-June, I was asked if there was anything specific that I wanted to see when the "official" tour was over. I asked to see the galley, joking that the reason I enlisted in the Air Force many years ago was because the Air Force ate better

than the other services and wanted to see if anything had changed.

The galley was a modern facility, very comfortable -- and very small.

According to Lt. Colin Engles, the food services officer who runs it -- and who happens to be originally from Bristol -- said its seating capacity is a mere 275.

He was quite proud, however, to note that between 900 and 1,000 sailors rotated through the facility for three meals a day.

But, I asked, there's no money being allotted in the base-closing budget that would indicate any planned expansion of the facility, which I would assume would be necessary to accommodate the increase in personnel that would be coming if Groton were to be closed.

Engles said it wasn't necessary to expand; increasing the hours of operations -- a half-hour more for breakfast and lunch and 45 minutes for dinner -- would be sufficient to deal with the situation.

But this week, we learned that Engles' optimism isn't shared by others.

In fact, it seems just two weeks before my visit to Kings Bay, Capt. A.O. Lotring, director of the Navy's Learning Center, had also visited and toured the southeastern Georgia facility.

#### Deficiencies cited

In a memo to the base commander, written after his visit, Lotring noted that there are several deficiencies at the base, which will have to be addressed in order to implement the Pentagon recommendation of transferring the Groton Submarine School to Kings Bay.

In particular, he noted, the galley would need to be expanded to accommodate the school population that can reach as high as 2,200 during peak times.

He also noted the Navy underestimated the number of classrooms that would be needed, the

construction costs for them, barracks and recreational facilities. All of this was contained in a memo, which was leaked last week, just 10 days before the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission begins deliberating on a final base closing list.

It would appear that Capt. Lotring, the individual who would be responsible for implementing the Navy's relocation plans, was never consulted prior to the release of the base closing list May 13.

Not part of decision  
In addition, Lotring's concerns were never incorporated into any of the Pentagon BRAC documents released by the Defense Department supporting the decision. Nor were any of those concerns raised during my three-hour tour of the base.

A couple of days after my visit to Kings Bay, U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, took the same tour I did. According to Simmons, Lotring's concerns were never mentioned during his visit, either.

There has never been any doubt that the Navy's initial cost projections to close Groton and transfer its subs and commands to Kings Bay and the Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia were questionable at best.

When the Norwich Bulletin sat down with four BRAC commissioners after their visit to Groton on the evening of May 31, former U.S. Rep. James Bilbray said just that. His exact words were, "I find them suspect."

Process violated  
State officials fighting to remove Groton from the base closing list claim the disclosure of the Lotring memo is evidence that the Defense Department significantly deviated from the BRAC process.

The commission can remove a base from the initial list if it believes there was a substantial deviation. The problem is, what's the definition of "substantial deviation?"

No question, the actual costs and savings are substantially different than what the Navy initially projected, but is that a substantial deviation from the process? It may not matter.

The intent of the BRAC commission is to save money. And it would appear clear that, at the very least, Connecticut has shown the savings aren't anywhere near what was stated.

### **Don't fear the BRAC--communities can bounce back**

The Free Lance-Star (Fredericksburg, VA)  
August 14, 2005

Attention, communities on the newest Base Realignment and Closure list: Don't panic. Don't cancel your plans for a prosperous future. Don't waste your money on a lobbyist who promises to save your base, because he can't.

Instead, talk to leaders in communities that have gone through the process in years past. You'll find that, although initially painful, closings of outdated or unneeded military facilities don't keep local economies down for long.

A new study from The Heritage Foundation looked at prior base closures in three environments: Southern California, with its urban nature and heavy Navy presence; Indiana, less populated and with a strong Air Force component; and Alabama, more rural and primarily an Army location. It found that, in almost every case, communities that lost military facilities regained 90 percent or more of the displaced jobs and per capita income within six years.

They've done so thanks to forward-thinking local leadership that identified alternate uses for the facilities and enacted aggressive post-BRAC recovery plans.

The grandfather of all BRAC recovery efforts is purportedly the Portsmouth-Rochester, N.H., area. When Pease Air Force Base closed there in 1988, local leaders sprang into action. Today, few people remember the air base. But many do business at the Pease International Tradeport,

### **BRAC Commission Early Bird**

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and leaders from that area have advised officials elsewhere on how to recover from base closings.

Also, Williams Air Force Base in Mesa, Ariz., closed in 1991, is today Williams Gateway Airport, an international aviation and aerospace center and designated foreign-trade zone.

Fort Devens in Ayer, Mass., another 1991 closure, has been transformed into a business campus with dozens of new tenants ranging from high-tech start-ups to Anheuser-Busch. The Charleston Naval Shipyard, BRAC class of '93, is now home to more than 100 private, local, state and federal organizations. Glenview (Ill.) Naval Air Station, another '93 closure, is being developed into an upscale, master-planned North Shore community called The Glen.

England Air Force Base in Alexandria, La., has become the city's airport and a business campus for a variety of concerns. Bergstrom Air Force Base in Austin, Texas, is now that city's airport, serving 7.2 million passengers annually. Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio has become a major logistics and distribution center and foreign trade zone.

Although local leadership is the key, Congress can help by doing the following:

Hold hearings on how communities have overcome past base closures. Help build confidence in communities that there is life after BRAC.

Support the 2005 BRAC list. Rather than fight to keep facilities off the list, members of Congress should explain why BRAC is important and how they will help their communities respond.

Help communities on the 2005 BRAC list and those from past lists communicate. Encourage communities that have emerged from the process successfully to lend their expertise to those just now going through it.

History shows that most communities recover quickly from BRAC. It won't necessarily be easy, but good local leadership and a sound

economic revitalization plan can go a long way to ease the sting of losing a base. And good leadership in Congress would go a long way toward convincing communities that BRAC is not about jobs--nor should it be. It's about national security.

We have too much military infrastructure, and much of what we have is inadequate to our needs. As such, it's especially important that we not let unfounded fears of economic disaster hold up the BRAC process.

Instead of worrying about getting off the BRAC list, local leaders should focus on getting on with the future.

### Additional Notes

#### **Interview with commander of the Air Force Materiel Command**

Timothy Gaffney  
Dayton Daily News  
August 13, 2005

Gen. Gregory S. Martin, who retires Friday as commander of the Air Force Materiel Command, shared his views about Base Realignment and Closure issues affecting Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in an interview with the 'Dayton Daily News.' AFMC has its headquarters and several major units at Wright-Patterson.

DDN: What personal viewpoints can you share about BRAC?

Martin: We have looked at whether we should consolidate the Naval Postgraduate School or (the Air Force Institute of Technology) or not. We looked at whether we should privatize it, and the secretary of defense chose not to do that once he was aware of the facts. I think those facts were accurate, and I hope the commission will see it that way.

First of all, I think the concept of privatizing sounds good, but frankly will restrict the flexibility we have to develop advanced

academic courses that are tailored to people who are needing to execute military skills ... that would be very difficult for a university to establish to meet your standards and have enough students come through it to be worth their while. ... Privatization does not look like a good thing except for those things that are ready-made for it.

Now, when it comes to combining Naval Postgraduate School and AFIT, I guess you could do that, but you'd better pick the right location. It wasn't clear that you were going to achieve a cost benefit in a reasonable amount of time by moving either of the two to one another's location. I think that was the secretary's position and I think that's a valid position.

Last, we don't want to discount the synergy we have, particularly to AFIT, when you have instructors at AFIT that are actually working in the Aeronautical Systems Center, the National Air and Space Intelligence Center or the Air Force Research Lab. ... I'm getting two for the price of one because I've got a guy that's doing research and development (and) at the same time doing some of the instructing.

Martin also discussed the Pentagon's recommendation to move an AFMC group that buys and supports database systems, the Development and Fielding Systems Group (formerly Materiel Systems Group) from Wright-Patterson to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts. It, and a group from Gunter Air Force Base in Alabama, would be a part of a larger consolidation of activities that develop Air Force command and control systems, known as C4ISR. The database group represents most of the Air Force and contractor jobs the Dayton area would lose — up to 2,500 jobs, according to the Pentagon's estimate.

Martin: I think the consolidation of our C4ISR stuff at one location was the right thing to do, but I was not a proponent of any specific location. ... (If) you take a look at moving our information technology and our command and control to one location, and that one location

also happened to have a fairly significant amount of intellectual capital from outside the military participating in our activities, I think it would be hard to discount the military capability that would bring about, and I think that was how the decision was made.