

Statement by Senator Tom Harkin
Base Realignment and Closure Commission Regional Hearing
St. Louis, Missouri
June 20, 2005

Members of the Commission, thank you for allowing me to address you this morning. We appreciate your coming today.

The money saved as a result of the BRAC process is intended to be used for quality-of-life initiatives and equipment modernization to support our troops. As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I know first-hand the stresses and demands on the Defense budget, especially in time of war.

For exactly this reason, I have grave concerns about the Pentagon's recommendation that TACOM-Rock Island be relocated to Warren, Michigan. Such a move would bring with it heavy investment expenditures. Instead of annual savings, there would be annual costs.

But what really baffles me is the illogic of this proposed move. We would be uprooting TACOM from Rock Island, where it has the complete infrastructure necessary to perform its mission, as well as room for an expanded mission in the future . . . and we would move it to a site that scores lower in terms of its military value, and that cannot accommodate an

expanded mission without new and costly construction. Certainly, no private-sector enterprise would approve such a move. Why should this Commission?

Later, presenters will explain in more detail why the TACOM recommendation is ill-advised from an economic perspective. Let me conclude with this observation: The cost of living in the Rock Island area is significantly lower than in Warren, Michigan. That's hardly a newsflash. But the added cost of housing the 1,126 relocated workers in the Warren-Detroit area will require an additional \$3.5 to \$5 million in annual payroll costs. And that's only the tip of the multimillion-dollar iceberg that will saddle taxpayers and the Department of Defense with costs that ought to rule out this move, strictly from a budget perspective.

So I strongly urge you to exercise your authority to revisit this ill-advised and costly move. And I urge you to convey to your colleagues on the Commission the need to reexamine and reverse what appears to be a very bad deal for the Department of Defense.