

Executive Correspondence
DCN 5791

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 29, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

On behalf of our respective delegations, we would like to thank you for your service in this important and difficult base realignment and closure process. You have an extremely tough task and are conducting it in a most professional manner. We are concerned, however, with a letter that was recently sent to you by the Alabama, Georgia, and Pennsylvania delegations. It is factually incorrect, and we must bring its inaccuracies to your attention.

When they write "we must reduce excess capacity..." it assumes that there is excess capacity; there is no excess capacity in Army depots. In fact, the data on which this claim is based was calculated with 2003 workload numbers before the impact of the Iraq war had been felt. We now know that the original projections for 2005 and 2006 are wildly off the mark. No one can honestly say that the war fighter's needs can be taken care of without the many services provided at the Red River Army Depot.

According to the GAO report dated July 1, 2005, the one-time cost to eliminate the Red River Army Depot is \$456M with savings over 20 years of \$539M. That means the net savings would only be \$83M, assuming that the numbers are correct. However, the \$456M estimate does not include the environmental clean up costs, the cost of relocating skilled workers, or the risk of losing talented people who will not relocate.

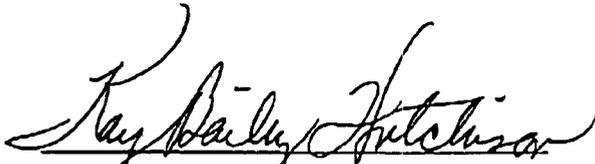
The consequence for limiting our wartime capacity and capability could be catastrophic. We cannot shortchange our soldiers in the field. Moreover, we do not know what the mission requirements are going to be on a long term basis. We need the capacity and flexibility, as well as the expertise that Red River offers.

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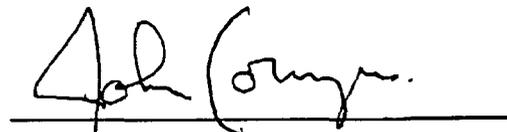
Finally, this week the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Cody, announced that the 1st Armor Division will be coming to Fort Bliss, Texas. This could represent a gain of almost 20,000 soldiers with hundreds of additional M1A1 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, artillery pieces, HMMWVs, and additional equipment coming to Texas. Red River is the only "hard iron" depot west of the Mississippi River. With almost 35% of the Army's combat power in the state of Texas, it is common-sense to keep Red River open and serving the war fighter.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve on this important commission. We hope you will agree that there is no excess capacity in the Army depot system and that we have to ensure we maintain our ability to fully support the future mission of our combat units. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Kay Bailey Hutchison



John Cornyn



Blanche Lincoln



Mark Pryor