

BRAC Commission

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Received

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

Dear Chairman Principi,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Samuel Skinner for his 6 June, 2005 visit to Naval Support Activity (NSA) Crane, IN prior to the BRAC hearing in St. Louis, MO on 20 June, 2005. As a concerned taxpayer I support the work you are doing to ensure that our Military operations remain as effective and affordable as possible. I hope that the on-site visit and hearing testimony helped the commission realize how important Indiana military installations like NSA Crane and Crane Army Ammunition Activity (CAAA) are to our Nation's Defense and the Global War On Terrorism.

I have approximately 40 years experience with the military installation now identified as NSA Crane, primarily as a government employee prior to my retirement in early 2004. I know how dedicated the employees at this installation are to support of the warfighter and how strongly the local communities support keeping the base active and fully utilized. The south-western Indiana region is heavily dependent on the economic stimulation provided by NSA Crane and any loss of operations will have a substantial impact on many surrounding counties. A unique capability to support all branches of DOD has evolved at NSA Crane that will be difficult to replace elsewhere if major components are realigned as contained in the DOD BRAC recommendations. I am growing increasingly concerned that the DOD recommendations were based on poor logic and that selection criteria were not properly applied in making the re-alignment recommendations.

A major thrust of the DOD BRAC recommendations was to create numerous centers of excellence, each covering specific DOD mission requirements. This will simplify

operations to some extent by removing duplications of effort, but will place all capability for a vital service under a single command with no competitive checks or balances remaining. Mistakes made by the single center of excellence will potentially go undetected for far too long and alternatives will not be readily available elsewhere when problems do surface. Realignment and consolidations of functions are undoubtedly justified in many places, but putting total reliance in one activity for a critical function is "penny wise and pound foolish".

Although I am concerned about all of the realignment actions recommended for NSA Crane, my background experience is almost entirely in the area of guns and ammunition. This specific area of technical activity is proposed for consolidation with other related activities from various Navy installations to become part of a guns and ammunition center of excellence at Picatinny Arsenal, NJ. This realignment action would result in the projected loss of 236 personnel at NSA Crane as well as many more at other Navy installations. My immediate concern is that the Navy would no longer retain a technical capability to support unique Navy, and associated Marine Corps, requirements. A consolidated guns and ammunition center of excellence under Army command will ultimately cease to respond to Navy and Marine Corps requirements and there will be no alternative available under emergency conditions. It may well be possible to justify some form of consolidation of capabilities within the Navy and Marine Corps, but the recommended realignment at Picatinny Arsenal, NJ would appear to be based on very questionable logic.

COBRA data supplied to support the recommended guns and ammunition center of excellence at Picatinny Arsenal, NJ estimates that a high percentage of personnel will move with the realignment. NSA Crane personnel have indicated a very strong intent to remain in this geographic area and only a small percentage are likely to move to the area of Picatinny Arsenal, NJ to become part of a consolidated center of excellence. The resulting loss of experience with Navy and Marine Corps unique gun and ammunition requirements would leave no option other than filling positions with people having little, if any, applicable experience. The DOD payback for up-front costs of the guns and ammunition consolidation are estimated to take some 13 years, but the very real cost of oversights and mistakes resulting from loss of Navy and Marine Corps expertise has

not been considered in the calculations. I strongly oppose the realignment of Navy and Marine Corps guns and ammunition functions as contained in the DOD recommendations.

Request that the BRAC Commission consider cancellation of all realignment actions recommended by DOD that would affect NSA Crane, IN, especially the realignment recommendation to form a DOD center of excellence for guns and ammunition at Picatinny Arsenal, NJ. The capabilities currently available at NSA Crane, complimented by a vast facility having almost no encroachment from surrounding development, is too valuable to be squandered without careful consideration of the existing military value. Please enter my comments into the public record and consider the points I have made before making your final recommendations to the President.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Loren E. Wilson".

Loren E. Wilson