



JEB BUSH
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

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June 21, 2005

Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

On behalf of the State of Florida, I write in appreciation of the tremendous challenge the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission faces in its review and evaluation of the BRAC recommendations recently released by the Department of Defense (DoD).

Florida fully supports the BRAC process as a necessary step to transform today's military to the lighter, more mobile operation needed to counter the unique threats of the 21st century, and we have long committed to partner with the DoD to maximize this transformation. From this point, we are proud Florida continues to provide our nation the necessary environment to build a strong, well-trained and equipped fighting force with a quality of life second to none. Also, we are pleased the DoD recognizes the strategic importance, military value, and cost effectiveness of Florida's installations and missions in ensuring troop preparedness and national security.

In its recent submission, we believe the DoD presented a thoughtful and appropriate set of recommendations for base realignment and closure as they pertain to Florida. However, there is one issue not addressed in the current recommendations that I believe should be considered by the Commission - continuing two home ports on the East Coast for naval carriers. In particular, I would draw your attention to the future utilization and capability of Naval Station Mayport as a nuclear carrier homeport.

Mayport not only has a rich naval history of carrier support but it has the strategic advantage of quick access to the open ocean (four to six times faster). Naval leadership has stressed the strategic importance of realigning nuclear carrier homeporting on the East Coast and with little effort Mayport, already a conventional carrier homeport, can become a premier nuclear carrier homeport. I fully support the Mayport community in their effort to gain the Commission's endorsement for a two-port carrier option with Mayport serving as one of these ports.

Thank you for all that you continue to do in service to our nation. I am always available for your consultation, and welcome your contact at any juncture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeb Bush".

Jeb Bush



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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

June 10, 2005

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission and share our views of the Defense Department's recommendations regarding Naval Station Mayport, Florida. Congress granted authority for the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process to protect and enhance the military value of our national defense infrastructure and, without compromising that value, save precious defense dollars in the cost of owning and operating our bases.

We are convinced that on balance the Department's recommendations are a strong and complete endorsement of the current and future military value of Florida's bases and our training and testing air, land and sea ranges. However, we are also convinced that the recommendations for Naval Station Mayport are not synchronized with recent Navy decisions and, therefore, do not look far enough into the future. The Department's recommendation can be perfected by the BRAC Commission's determination to homeport a nuclear aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport and directing the Navy to start the infrastructure improvements necessary to do so. Accordingly, I urge the Commission to fully evaluate and accept the Jacksonville community's proposals as submitted.

As you may know, in a budget reduction exchange between the Office and Management and Budget and the Department of Defense at the end of last year, the Navy decided to reduce the size of the nation's aircraft carrier fleet from twelve to eleven ships. Notwithstanding our strong opposition to the notion of reducing our carrier fleet during a time of war and growing tension in the Pacific, the concept of reducing the fleet highlights a matter of immediate and long-term strategic risk in our carrier stationing.

The Navy's current plan is to mothball the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY, a conventionally powered carrier homeported at Naval Station Mayport. With KENNEDY out of service all carriers in the Atlantic Fleet will be homeported in a single east coast base. The strategic risk to force protection with the concentration of all our east coast carriers in one vulnerable port is apparent. In testimony before the Senate this year the Chief of Naval Operations expressed his concern over this strategic risk as the "over-concentration" of the carriers at a single east coast base and indicated that the nation needs two stations capable of basing nuclear carriers. If the KENNEDY is mothballed the CNO's notion of "over-concentration" becomes an absolute-concentration and the strategic risk unacceptable. Additionally, in a recent letter to

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me the Secretary of the Navy unequivocally stated the Navy's intention to "accelerate the replacement of the KENNEDY at Mayport with a nuclear carrier." Given the Navy's plan to reduce the carrier fleet, all active aircraft carriers will be nuclear within three to five years. Naval Station Mayport is a carrier base, has long been a carrier base and, consistent with Navy plans and the prudent reduction of strategic risk, should have the necessary facilities improvements to accommodate homeporting a nuclear carrier as soon as possible. The Commission should interview the Chief of Naval Operations in this regard.

We are convinced that this matter of immediate and long-term strategic risk in our carrier stationing is clearly within the responsibility and authority of the BRAC Commission's consideration and action. As mentioned, the reduction of the nation's carrier fleet was based on a budget decrement against the Navy late last year by the Office of Management and Budget. This budget action was taken at the tail end of the BRAC analytical timelines as established by the Department of Defense. We are informed by the Navy that they did not attempt the late introduction of the concept of making Naval Station Mayport nuclear capable in the interest of the integrity of the Department's analysis and BRAC process. This is unfortunate given the Navy's clear intentions to move a nuclear carrier to Naval Station Mayport and the strategic urgency to do so sooner rather than later.

We urge the Commission to recommend the stationing of a nuclear aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport. The Commission's support for the Navy's decision to make Naval Station Mayport nuclear capable in its BRAC recommendations would have two critically important results. It would provide for the strategically appropriate and earliest possible dispersal of our carriers on the east coast; and, it would provide the funds necessary for the facility improvements within the appropriate BRAC account thus relieving some of the pressure on the Navy budget.

We appreciate the very difficult and important mission that lies ahead of the Commission. There is much work to do and little time to do it. We assure you that, along with the State of Florida and its many military communities, we are eager to assist you in any way to ensure that the 2005 BRAC process provides the best possible defense infrastructure at the best possible cost and enhances our national security today and for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you through the days ahead.

Sincerely,



Encl

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HEARING ON FY2006 DEFENSE BUDGET REQUEST
FEBRUARY 10, 2005**

[EXTRACT]

SEN. WARNER: ... and secondly, the opening of the options to continue a base structure that can service our carriers. Presently you have two East Coast bases and two West Coast bases servicing carriers. But the base in Florida, Mayport, is limited because it is not equipped to handle the advanced technology of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. So I'd like to have you walk through first how your Department of the Navy arrived at this recommendation, which I presume was made by the Department of the Navy to the president, the timing of it, and secondly, how do you propose to plan for the future.

ADM. CLARK: Okay, Mr. Chairman. Let me start with the second question first and just say that I have spoken publicly for some months about the post-9/11 world that we live in and the -- my belief that there's danger in over-centralizing. And I believe that -- and you know my track history. I've been working to create efficiency in the Navy as fast as I can make it happen.

Having said that, it is my view that over-centralization of the port structure is not a good strategic move, and my view has been that I need, and the Navy should have, two carrier-capable home ports on each coast. So that's where I -- I put that on the table first, and then let me go to the second question.

SEN. WARNER: Well, to the best of my knowledge, you have not formally communicated that to the Congress in the course of testimony through the years. Am I correct in that?

ADM. CLARK: I don't recall --

SEN. WARNER: So this is the first testimony --

ADM. CLARK: I don't recall having that discussion in front of committee. I said I've been public about this; I've spoken about this a number of times in public.

SEN. WARNER: But this is the first formal presentation to the Congress?

ADM. CLARK: That's correct. And, of course, you know, with the activity that we have ongoing with evaluating the military value of various sites, this is a centerpiece discussion and we all understand that.

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SEN. BILL NELSON: Now, let me ask you about your conversation with Senator Warner earlier in which you stated that you want -- in your opinion, what's in the defense interests of this country, to have two nuclear carrier ports on the East Coast of the United States. Is that correct?

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ADM. CLARK: I didn't say "nuclear carrier" I said "carrier ports." But if all that was left in the force was the nuclear -- and nuclear is our desire; it's much more capable, it's much more -- provides much more flexibility and is a better combat platform. And it is my belief that it would be a serious strategic mistake to have all of those key assets of our Navy tied up in one port.

SEN. BILL NELSON: On that point, you and I very much agree.

ADM. CLARK: I'm glad to hear that, Senator.

SEN. BILL NELSON: Yes. Yes, indeed. Well then, are you requesting funds in this budget -- and there are \$10 million in the budget for an environmental impact study for a second nuclear port for a carrier.

ADM. CLARK: Well, I saw that -- I saw the press report that said that there was a line item for an EIS. And actually, I don't believe that that's an accurate report. What the factual reality is, is that for us to make a change and ensure that we have two carrier-capable ports on the East Coast of the United States, as we do on the West Coast, we would have to initiate an environmental impact statement to do that. I believe that maybe the -- what the reporter may have heard was that we have funds in the budget for that kind of general purpose use; it's not a line item specifically identified for that. If all of this goes through as has been submitted and planned -- and I recognize that it will be some time before the final decisions will be made because nothing will happen without the Congress's approval -- but it would be my intention to recommend that we commence such an EIS so that we could establish that capability.

SEN. BILL NELSON: And an EIS, then, you are suggesting is critical to making --

ADM. CLARK: Got to get started. And let me just say how long it will take. An EIS typically takes two to three years. And that means that the clock is ticking and we need to get moving.

SEN. BILL NELSON: So, two to three years, let's say it's three years, and you haven't even started on making your second port, i.e., Mayport, Jacksonville, Florida, nuclear-capable, and if you scrap the Kennedy, you've got all your nuclear carriers then for a period of up to five years all in one port.

ADM. CLARK: That's correct. I anticipate that it would take two to three years for the EIS and a couple of years to then build the capability. And in my view, that's not the way one would want to be postured.

SEN. BILL NELSON: On that point we definitely agree. And Mr. Chairman, that is a point of vulnerability to this nation. And I will continue to press the point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350 - 1000



April 28, 2005

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0905

Dear Senator Nelson:

This letter is in response to your recent question regarding my comments in Jacksonville last April.

In April, 2004, the Navy's announced plan and budget was to temporarily change the homeport of the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY from Mayport to Norfolk as part of a planned overhaul. At that time, this temporary homeport change was causing some angst in the Jacksonville area. The purpose of my remarks in Jacksonville was to assuage this concern.

Unfortunately, circumstances do change. Even though the Navy budget has increased in 2006, the Department of the Navy has concluded that it no longer needs to retain the KENNEDY in active service to meet current and future operational needs.

Retiring the KENNEDY allows us to address other high-priority Navy needs and to accelerate the replacement of the KENNEDY at Mayport with a nuclear carrier. These two actions will enhance the national security posture of the United States, and your support is therefore requested and appreciated.

Thanks!

Andrew England

Cc: Chairman Warner



June 17, 2005

General James T. Hill (USA, Ret)
2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Hill:

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission has the critical task of crafting the future architecture of the Department of Defense's installations. The President of the United States and the U.S. Congress have empowered the BRAC Commission to provide objective and independent review and analysis of DOD's BRAC recommendations and provide a comprehensive layout of what installations will be necessary to meet the current and future national security demands of our nation. We understand that this is a very difficult and complex responsibility, and we appreciate the great effort being made by the entire BRAC Commission and staff to perform this essential duty.

In accordance with the future needs of our national security strategy, we respectfully request that you and your colleagues on the BRAC Commission consider and evaluate the enclosed information regarding the future utilization and capability of Naval Station Mayport. It is clear that nuclear aircraft carriers are the future; however unless a DOD infrastructure deficiency is remedied the Navy will not have the proper east coast infrastructure to homeport them. The attached briefing paper and photographs outline this deficiency, and unless rectified, it could expose nuclear aircraft carriers in the Atlantic Fleet to security perils. The most feasible solution to this infrastructure shortfall is for the BRAC Commission to consider realigning the Navy's east coast ports to ensure that nuclear aircraft carrier s have two operational homeports, as the leaders of the Navy have recommended in numerous venues including recent congressional hearings. Governor Bush and Senators Nelson and Martinez join in this request and have provided separate letters of endorsement.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue. We look forward to presenting this position during the July 12th BRAC Commission regional hearing.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ander Crenshaw in black ink.

ANDER CRENSHAW
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of John Peyton in black ink.

JOHN PEYTON
Mayor of Jacksonville

ENCL

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT UPGRADE TO NUCLEAR CAPABLE STATUS - CRITICAL TO OUR NATION'S DEFENSE

I. U.S. Naval Carrier Dispersal is a Strategic Imperative

The U.S. Navy has long insisted that it must provide sufficient deepwater ports in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans for the servicing, protection, and dispersal of its fleet ships, particularly its aircraft carriers. Strategic homeporting is a vital necessity for any global naval power, and naval forces should be based close to primary operating areas and expected combat theaters. It is equally important that fleet concentrations be avoided that could create strategic and operational vulnerabilities or security weaknesses.

In the Pacific, our Navy's carriers are dispersed around four ports: Yokosuka, San Diego, Everett, and Bremerton. In contrast, due to years of consolidations and base closures, the Atlantic Fleet has been left with just two sites - Norfolk and Mayport.

II. Without Action, Atlantic Fleet Could be Left with One Carrier Homeport

Norfolk is the only Atlantic Fleet port currently capable of homeporting nuclear-powered carriers (CVNs). When USS John F. Kennedy is decommissioned, all Atlantic carriers will reside in Norfolk at two adjacent piers. This situation will create obvious congestion and security concerns, in addition to the real possibility that these carriers could be bottled up if the long and restricted transit to sea from Naval Station Norfolk is compromised by a terrorist strike or severe weather.

The Atlantic Fleet carrier concentration is further exacerbated by the fact that our nation's only shipyard that builds carriers (Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipyard) and the Atlantic Fleet's only CVN-capable public shipyard (Norfolk Naval Shipyard) are also located in the same port-Norfolk. The historic lessons of Pearl Harbor, refreshed by the attack on USS COLE, the events of 9/11, and FBI intelligence reports suggesting that terrorist attacks on U.S. ships in their homeports have been planned, serve as a powerful reminder that dispersing our carrier fleet on the East Coast is a strategic imperative.

Accordingly, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy have both testified before Congress that it would be dangerously imprudent for the Fleet's security to base all its Atlantic Fleet carriers in one Atlantic port.

III. BRAC Commission Should Direct the Navy to Upgrade Mayport to CVN-capable Status

Mayport is the best and only feasible location for additional Atlantic Fleet nuclear carrier homeporting. Because Mayport has homeported aircraft carriers for the past fifty years, much of the unique maintenance support needed to maintain one or more CVNs is already in place. The required technical upgrades necessary to support nuclear-powered carriers can be made within a reasonable period of time and at reasonable cost. Best estimates indicate it will take 3 to 5 years to complete the pier upgrades, dredging and construction work required to make Mayport CVN-capable. The national engineering company BHR-ARCADIS recently completed a comprehensive review of this and has estimated that Mayport can be appropriately upgraded for approximately \$137 million.

The 2005 BRAC Commission has the responsibility and authority to initiate infrastructure realignments that will support our nation's military operating forces of the future (SECDEF has defined this for BRAC as looking 20 years into the future).

Failure to develop a second nuclear carrier homeport on the East Coast will leave our Atlantic Fleet Carriers poorly supported and vulnerable to attack.

Thus, the Commission should include in its report the upgrade of Mayport to CVN-capable status in order to provide the port infrastructure required for the Navy's fleet of the future.

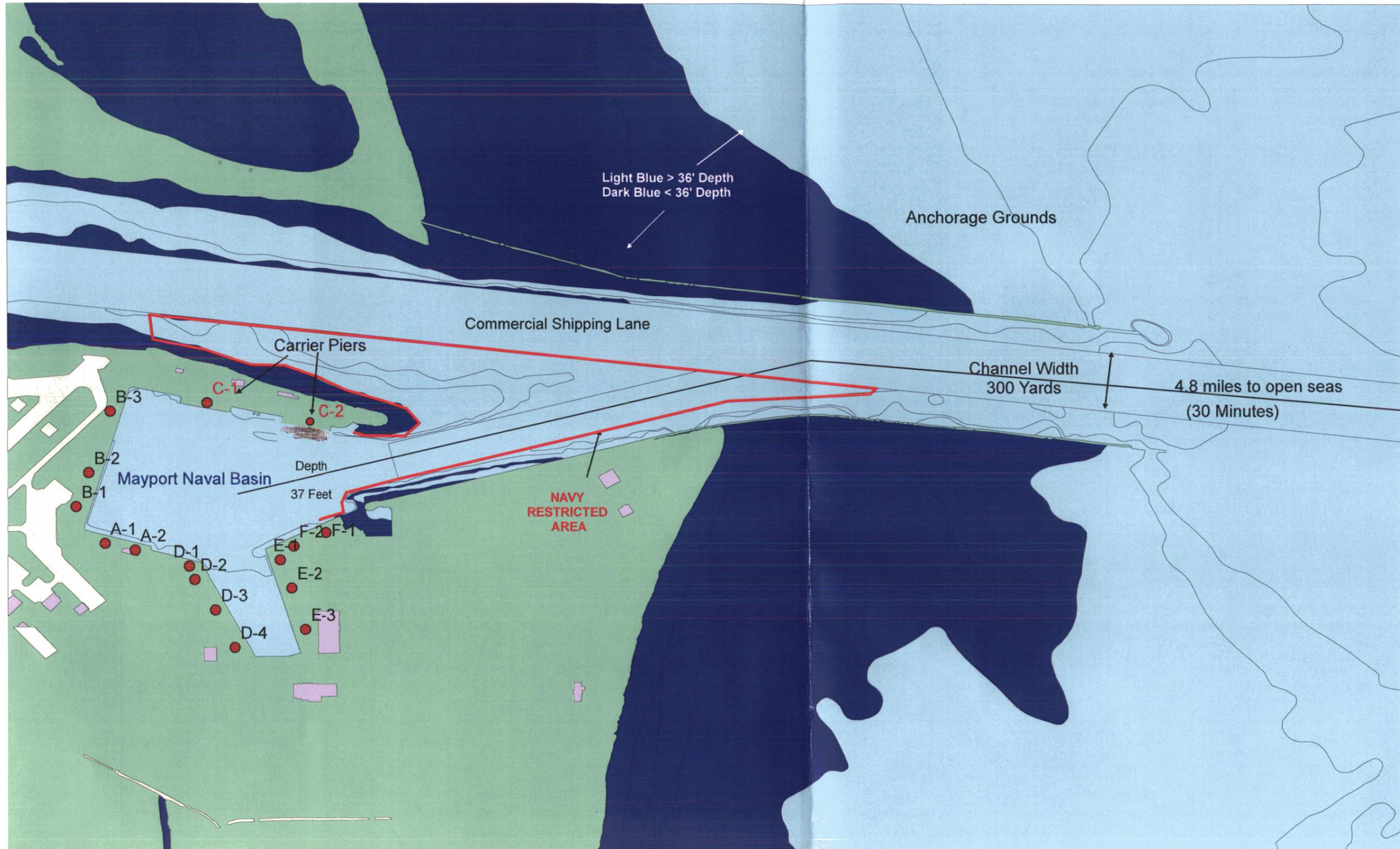


Norfolk Naval Station
July 7, 2003

Mayport Naval Station
May, 2004



MAYPORT



NORFOLK

