

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

18 August, 2005

BRAC Commission

AUG 29 2005

Received

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

We wanted to take this opportunity to comment on several issues related to Submarine Base Kings Bay that have arisen in the last several days. Knowing your Commission's consideration of this issue is quickly drawing to a close, we appreciate your attention to this letter at this time.

The letter from the Commanding Officer of the Submarine Learning Center to the Commander Officer of Submarine Base Kings Bay (dated June 8, 2005) identifies design considerations for training facilities and highlights concerns from the perspective of the Commanding Officer of the Submarine Learning Center. This was done in the context of identifying issues that could impact execution of BRAC recommendations should they become effective and is part of the normal advance planning that must take place to ensure a successful BRAC execution process. Conducting this type of detailed planning subsequent to the release of BRAC recommendations is consistent with previous BRAC rounds and does not constitute an oversight by the Navy.

Since actual facility design will not take place until after BRAC decisions are made, it is important to identify design requirements up front, at the beginning of the design process. This ensures that facilities will meet requirements and be constructed at the lowest possible costs. Many of the facility capabilities identified in the letter are already understood by Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay based on their experiences with the Trident Training Facility and its ability to support advanced submarine training. We remain confident that these building planning factors were correctly reflected in DoD's BRAC recommendations.

Additional concerns identified in the letter such as gym and dining facilities can be resolved through process management. They do not necessarily equate to an expanded building program. For example, if existing excess capacity at the base galley is not sufficient to accommodate all the growth, the option is available to manage any small facility capability gaps by expanding meal hours and regulating classroom schedules. This is similar to public school cafeterias which cannot seat all students at once but are able to serve all students by varying lunch periods. Athletic facility scheduling could be handled in the same manner when considering the added loading represented by the Submarine School student body.

Finally, the weather-related comments about Wet Bulb Global Temperature (WBGT) could be misleading if taken out of context. Although WBGT may have exceeded the 85 degree limit at some time during "71 days out of 104 days," it is important to remember that during the morning hours WBGT is within an acceptable range. Outside physical fitness activity is easily accommodated at Kings Bay and is supported by a capable staff that monitors weather conditions. Once again process management is the solution to this particular concern.

The bottom line is that current capacity at Kings Bay for these service support areas can accommodate the growth represented by BRAC recommendations should they become effective. We remain confident that the Kings Bay BRAC construction cost estimates generated by the Navy's BRAC team, reviewed by the Navy's Kings Bay team, and verified by the GAO, are consistent and represent a valid and realistic estimate of the requirements to execute DoD's BRAC recommendations.

Relative to the GAO's response to questions from the Commission (August 10, 2005), the GAO estimates that, based on higher construction costs and elimination of fewer military positions, the 20-year savings from closing Submarine Base New London may be closer to \$1.2B than DoD's estimate of \$1.6B. Nevertheless, even with \$1.2B in expected savings, this closure still represents significant savings.

Lastly, community groups have recently challenged the Navy's decision to not include a third graving dock at Submarine Base New London in their analysis. The Navy did not consider this graving dock to be "certified" because it experienced a structural failure and required repair prior to certification. Ms. Anne Davis, the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy for Base Realignment and Closure, reported to us that the impact of one additional graving drydock on the military value score would have been an increase in 0.11 out of 100 points. Consequently, we agree with Navy's decision to not include this facility in their analysis of Submarine Base New London.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,


Jack Kingston
Member of Congress


Saxby Chambliss
United States Senate


Johnny Isakson
United States Senate