



DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

DCN 6574

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*August 3, 2005*

*The Honorable David M. Walker  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20548*

*Dear Mr. Walker:*

*Thank you for your testimony before the Commission on July 18, 2005. I would also like to express my appreciation for the valuable testimony presented by your colleagues.*

*During your testimony, you agreed to respond expeditiously to any questions for the record that the Commission might request. I would appreciate your response to the enclosed questions no later than August 10, 2005.*

*Thank you again for your cooperation in this regard. Your continued assistance is critical as the Commission strives to create a fair, open, and constructive deliberative process.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony J. Principi". The signature is written in a cursive style.

*Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman*

*Enclosure.*

**Chairman:** Anthony J. Principi

**Commissioners:** The Honorable James H. Bilbray, The Honorable Philip E. Coyle III, Admiral Harold W. Gehman Jr., USN (Ret), The Honorable Jim Hansen, General James T. Hill, USA (Ret), General Lloyd Newton, USAF (Ret), The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner, Brigadier General Sue Ellen Turner, USAF (Ret)

**Executive Director:** Charles Battaglia

1. As GAO notes in its report (p. 105), most of the projected recurring savings from the closure of Submarine Base New London would come from the elimination of billets there. Some 1,500 billets would be eliminated, including 743 civilian billets, which is about 80% of the total civilian billets at the base.

Question: Is GAO satisfied that:

(i) The Navy conducted a sufficiently rigorous analysis to justify the elimination of so many billets at New London?

(ii) The information developed in the data calls was properly verified by the Naval Audit Service and at higher echelons in the chain of command of the bases involved?

2. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, this Commission received sworn testimony that closure of Submarine Base New London could dramatically impact submarine shipbuilding costs. In fact, John Casey, President of the nation's primary submarine contractor, General Dynamics-Electric Boat testified that New London's closure could result in additional procurement costs of up to \$50 million per year. The additional costs would come from Electric Boat's inability to deflect overhead costs to maintenance contracts it currently fulfills at the base.

Question: Did you find any evidence that the Defense Department considered these additional costs in its BRAC analysis?

3. GAO points out in its report (p. 103) that uncertainty remains over the Navy force structure. This is particularly true with regard to attack submarines. This uncertainty was one of the factors pointed to by GAO as perhaps warranting additional attention from this Commission.

Question: Does GAO have concerns that, in the face of such uncertainty, a decision to close a base like New London would have the effect of restricting the Navy's flexibility regarding long-term submarine requirements since we would now have only two East Coast bases to homeport, train, and maintain them?

4. On June 6, the Connecticut delegation testified that the Navy's cost estimate for moving the Submarine School to Kings Bay was understated. For example, they testified that: The Navy's school construction cost of \$211 per square foot is not consistent with recent experience averaged at \$325 per square foot - a \$47M difference; the Navy did not factor in the cost of reassembling and testing the submarine trainers - a \$31 million difference; the Navy did not factor in the 20 per cent additional costs associated with building on the unstable soil of Kings Bay - a \$30 million difference; and the Navy did not consider the costs of additional family housing units.

Question: Was the GAO able to verify the accuracy of the Navy's cost estimates of moving SUBSCOL in light of these discrepancies?

6. Question. What do you see as the successes and opportunities missed this BRAC round in terms of advancing jointness among the services and across common support functions? Did you see any improvements in this area this time compared to prior BRAC rounds?
7. Question. While each service cannot count the saving from the drawdown of overseas force structure as part of BRAC, what is your view on reapplying these savings to the cost of executing BRAC re-stationing implementation costs?
8. Question. Does GAO believe that military value is enhanced and efficiencies gained with the Army running an airfield that will have the same level of training activity or more (with the addition of the 4th BCT to the 82d Airborne Division) in the future?
9. Question. Does GAO have any observations or comments on the potential loss of already existing synergies, joint culture and joint-contingency operations planning capabilities between Pope AFB and Ft Bragg, if Pope is realigned as recommended?
10. Question. How would you assess the success of DOD's recommendations toward reducing excess capacity within the department? Do you have any observations on where DOD ended up compared with the attention given to DOD's data more than a year ago projecting excess capacity in the 25 percent range?