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This is in regards to the DOD recommendation to close Naval Support Activity Corona and move NSWC Corona to Pt. Mugu.

I do work there. But I urge you to remove NSWC Corona from the BRAC list on objective military value grounds.

We act essentially as Consumer Reports' technical staff for the Navy and increasingly for other services.

Moving our command to MAWCWPNS Pt. Mugu would decimate the technical expertise base. It would probably take a decade or more to rebuild the lost expertise. Because of the drastically higher housing costs in Ventura county, on the order of half of our work forces would not move. For a similar example, if you remember, many feel a contributing factor to the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster was the loss of expertise at Boeing when they moved out of the LA area.

With major weapon systems becoming more complex and costly, the loss of our expertise will cost the country in the long run. It is hard to quantify, but given that the that major acquisition programs now cost hundreds of billions of dollars, an acquisition error caused by the degradation in our Consumer Reports function for the government can easily cost millions perhaps billions, much more than the projected closing avings.

The Senate Armed Services Committee just released a report that attributes a "significant part" of the blame for Defense contracting troubles to "inadequate human capital planning and continued reductions in the defense acquisition workforce." SASC is concerned that organizational problems and personnel instability are undermining major weapon-systems programs. And over the past decade, DOD downsized its acquisition workforce by almost half while the contract dollars have roughly doubled. GAO notes retirements in the acquisition workforce almost certainly will increase in the next few years, leaving DOD short of experienced hands in some critical procurement billets. Moving NSWC Corona to Pt. Mugu would be another factors compounding these acquisition workforce problems.

If the land and facilities NSWC Corona currently occupies is too costly to maintain, it would make far more sense to move us to March Air Reserve Base. Since that move is less than 30 miles, towards cheaper housing, many more employees here would accept working at MARCH ARB. Also, that move would not have PCS costs associated with it.

Additionally, collocating on an Air Force command would help foster jointness. This is important because part of our function is independent assessment of complex air defense

exercises and our proven methodology could help quantify Homeland Security exercises. And if we went to NAWCWPNS Pt. Mugu as a tenant command, there would always be the financial temptation in the future to consolidate our command staff into Pt Mugu's command staff for cost savings, thereby undermining the independent status vital to our value. We were originally removed from China Lake for this very sort of conflict of interest on fuzes.

In short, independent assessment is not popular but is vital and would be severely hurt by moving NSWC Corona to NAWCWPNS Pt. Mugu.