

THE
NEW ENGLAND
COUNCIL

April 22, 2005

Anthony Principi
Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
Polk Building
Suite 600
2521 South Clark St.
Arlington, VA 22202

RECEIVED
4/22/05

Re: Base Realignment and Closure in New England

Dear Secretary Principi:

As the nation's oldest regional business organization dedicated to promoting economic development and a high quality of life in the six-state region, The New England Council writes in support of keeping New England's military facilities open. New England's military presence has been reduced more severely than other regions during prior base realignments and closures and the New England's military infrastructure is already extremely small. The miniscule military presence in New England has a detrimental effect on the region and on our nation's military. These consequences should not be exacerbated by further base closures and realignments in New England through the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) process. Starting with the Revolutionary War, New England has a proud tradition of hosting our nation's military. The Council and the citizens of New England remain committed to continuing that tradition.

I. New England's Military Presence has been Disproportionately Reduced in Prior Base Closings and Realignments.

New England has experienced disproportionately deeper reductions in military personnel and infrastructure than other regions in the prior base closing and realignments in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995. According to statistics compiled by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, from September 1987 to September 2002, the number of active duty military personnel based in New England dropped from 30,600 to 12,700, a reduction of 58%. New England's reduction in active duty personnel during this period exceeded reductions in all other regions and greatly exceeded the national average, which was 24%. For example, the Western region suffered a reduction of only 29.8% and the Southern region a reduction of 15.3%. Three (Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire) of the 11 states in which military personnel declined by more than 50% from 1987 to 2002 are located in New England. New Hampshire suffered the steepest decline

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of military personnel of any state in the country, *losing an amazing 92.1% of its military personnel over the 15 year period.*

New England's military infrastructure has also been disproportionately reduced more than other regions. In 1987, New England's active duty personnel made up approximately 2% of the U.S. based force. However, during the four previous rounds of base closing and realignments, 5.3% (five out of 93) of the major bases closed or realigned have been located in New England and 7.1% (28 out of 384) of the total bases closed or realigned have been located in New England.

II. As a Result of the Reductions, New England's Military Presence is Disproportionately Small.

As a result of reductions in the military since 1987, New England's military presence in terms of personnel and infrastructure is disproportionately small. As of 2002, about 5% of the nation's population lived in the six New England states. However, only 1.2% of the nation's active duty military personnel is based in New England. Furthermore, every New England states' percentage of military personnel lagged its share of population in the United States. Most notably, Massachusetts makes up 2.4% of the population of the United States, but only .2% of the nation's active duty military personnel are based in Massachusetts.

New England's military infrastructure is also disproportionately small. According to the Department of Defense's most recent *Base Structure Report*, *not one of the 93 "large installations" -- defined as having a total property replacement value of greater than \$1.553 billion -- located in the United States is located in New England.* Although the New England region lacks a "large installation", a number of states outside New England have multiple "large installations" including Georgia which has five large installations, Maryland with four and Oklahoma with three. Moreover, only three of the 99 "medium installations" are located in New England.

III. New England's Small Military Presence Has Consequences that Will be Exacerbated by Further Base Closings.

The consequences of New England's small military presence have negative effects that will only be exacerbated by further New England base closings. The Department of Defense and the Base Realignment and Closure Commission must give priority consideration to military value in selecting installations for closure or realignment. New England's small military presence cannot be reduced further without impacting military readiness and mission capabilities.

The military's presence in a region is important to defending the region in this current environment of unconventional threats, especially terrorism. As a location of major financial centers in Boston, Providence and Hartford and with its proximity to New York City, New England remains a potential target of terrorism. Because New England's military presence has been severely reduced in prior base closing rounds, the region

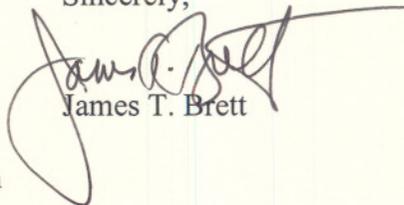
cannot afford further closures without compromising the region's sense of security. For example, New England has only one active duty military airfield in Brunswick, Maine and one active duty naval base in New London, Connecticut. Both must remain open in order to defend New England from emergent threats like cruise missile attacks from offshore.

Criteria that DOD and BRAC are considering in the base closure and realignment process includes "readiness of total force" and "manpower implications." New England is home to five percent of the country's population and Boston is the seventh largest metropolitan area in the country; yet, the region's small military presence hurts efforts to recruit in New England. This is a crucial issue in a time when the military is having difficulty recruiting personnel, especially in New England. A 2001 study showed that four out of every five high schools in New England deny access to at least two military branches for recruitment purposes and that military recruitment suffered as a result. Military personnel and infrastructure are not common sites in New England and therefore potential recruits are likely much more wary of joining something for which they are not familiar. Further closures of New England military bases would exacerbate this situation.

The military must maintain a presence in New England in order to take advantage of New England's technology and academic cluster. Military technology facilities are crucial to the strategic realignment of U.S. warfighting forces and the future development of advanced technology defense systems is dependent on military bases' proximity to technology clusters. New England is the home of the world's greatest technology clusters with federally-funded research and development centers, cutting-edge academic expertise and a concentration of high-tech industrial partners. Four of New England's six states rank in the top 11 on the 2004 Milken Institute State Technology and Science Index with Massachusetts ranked first in the nation. This Index ranks states on research and development inputs, technology and science workforce and technology concentration and dynamism. Further reductions in New England's military presence may have the effect of lessening the military's technological warfighting ability.

The New England region has a proud tradition of housing and supporting our nation's military. In continuing that support, we offer our comments with the belief that in taking our comments into consideration, the base realignment and closure process will leave our military in a stronger position to defend our nation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



James T. Brett

cc: New England Congressional Delegation
New England Governors