

**Statement of Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Regional Hearing
July 6, 2005**

Commissioner Newton, Commissioner Principi, and Commissioner Turner. Good morning and thank you for inviting Rhode Island to speak today. I would like to introduce our panel: Governor Donald Carcieri, Senator Lincoln Chafee, Congressman Patrick Kennedy, Congressman Jim Langevin and Mr. Keith Stokes, Executive Director of the Newport Chamber of Commerce.

The Navy and Newport have been partners in providing for our nation's defense since the Civil War. We are pleased that the Department of Defense has recognized the high military value of Rhode Island's facilities in its recommendations. Naval Station Newport, anchored by the Naval War College, is the Navy's center of officer training, with a stellar faculty and ample, quality facilities. The Naval Undersea Warfare Center is the intellectual heart of the research and development of undersea warfare and will benefit greatly from the addition of maritime sensor, warfare and electronic work.

Rhode Island is also proud to be the receiver of five additional C130Js, filling out our 143rd Airlift Wing at Quonset Point, which was the first to fly the C130J in combat in Iraq.

I believe the acknowledged military value of the naval facilities at Newport compels a reevaluation of two Defense Department recommendations which would move the Navy Warfare Doctrine Command and the Maritime Information Systems RDAT&E from Rhode Island.

The Navy Warfare Development Command was relocated to Newport from Norfolk a mere seven years ago. After that move, it took the Command three to five years to rebuild the necessary intellectual capital. The Command is now at full capacity and providing the Navy with doctrine and concept of operations. In addition, while NWDC serves the fleet of today, it still benefits from the perspective gained from a physical distance from the fleet. If NWDC was returned to Norfolk, the Command may suffer from another dearth in intellectual capital and may become preoccupied with day-to-day fleet operations rather than focusing on the near future. I would argue, therefore, that the Navy would be best served by keeping the Naval Warfare Development Command in Newport.

The Department of Defense has also recommended moving the Maritime Information Systems RDAT&E from NUWC to San Diego. While San Diego has experience in surface antennas, submarine communication systems are much different and the repository of knowledge and expertise in submarine antennas and radio rooms resides in Newport. Since past experience shows that only about 15% of the personnel would relocate, a move would result in a major loss of intellectual capital. In addition, NUWC has created a "virtual submarine" in Newport which allows operational testing of

systems that would otherwise have to be done on operating platforms. Because of its complexity and sensitivity, moving part of the communications complex across the country would destroy the present ability to provide comprehensive testing of the communications system. It is estimated that it will cost approximately \$230 million to replicate this testing capability at San Diego, a cost not considered by the Defense Department.

Finally, much of what we do in Rhode Island compliments the work done at the Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut. I have been invited to be a member of the Connecticut panel so I will be speaking further about this relationship at that time.

Rhode Island is proud to be the home of such significant military facilities. We have worked hard to lower base operating costs - providing the Navy with significant savings in electricity and trash removal costs and water rate structures. We will continue hard to ensure that Navy operations are cost efficient and military personnel are welcomed and cared for. Thank you.

I would now like to turn to Governor Carcieri.

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**Testimony of Senator John Kerry
(For the Record)
BRAC Commission Public Hearing
July 6, 2005
Boston, MA**

Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, your work—which is to provide an objective assessment of the Defense Department’s recommendations—is vital to the BRAC process. And I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss Massachusetts’ bases with you.

I won’t waste my limited moments here waxing nostalgic about the tradition of military service in Massachusetts and throughout New England. But it’s as old as the country itself, and we are proud of our military bases and we are proud of the men and women who serve on them. They are an important tie between communities and the nation. They live among us. Their children go to school with our children. No matter where they are from, they are our sons and daughters. We want them to stay.

But the case for Massachusetts’ bases is not founded on emotion or economic impact. It’s based on hard facts.

The presentation we’ve just seen makes clear: Otis Air National Guard Base remains vital and relevant to the threats we face today. The Defense Department got it wrong in putting Otis on its list.

Let me recap the main points:

- Otis’ military value was not fully captured in the Defense Department’s calculations, particularly as it relates to Homeland Defense.
- The Air Force’s expected savings from closing Otis are over-stated and ignore the other costs that the government will incur.
- And finally, the closure of Otis will gravely undermine the ability of other federal tenants—and there are 28 of them—on the base, including the United States Coast Guard, to perform their missions.

Congress told the Department of Defense to consider impacts on other tenants. But DOD failed to do that. Closing Otis would significantly jeopardize the sustainability of U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Cod. Over the last two years, the Coast Guard has conducted 520 search and rescue operations from Otis. And for the Coast Guard, Otis’ value is all about geography. Losing Otis puts U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Cod in serious jeopardy of loss or relocation—and that is not acceptable.

But ignoring the Coast Guard’s Mission at Otis is part of a bigger problem: a general failure by the Air Force to factor Homeland Defense into its considerations. You saw the charts. You saw the routes used by international flights. You know that more than 400 of those flights every month are considered “Flights of Interest.” And if you look at the location of Otis and its access to supersonic air space you can see: Otis Air National Guard Base is the best positioned air base to rapidly intercept threats at maximum range

The bottom line is simple: Otis Air National Guard Base should remain open. Its unique geographic location, access to unrestricted airspace, and its importance to other vital federal missions—including the operations of the Coast Guard—make it critical to the nation’s security.

There are several other bases in Massachusetts that warrant our attention today. I would like to share some additional thoughts on a few in particular. Hanscom Air Force Base plays a vital role in building and maintaining America’s high-tech air and space forces. Its unique location in the heart of the nation’s preeminent high-technology cluster is a strategic asset. The Air Force recognized Hanscom’s unique value in seeking to consolidate some of its high-tech research, development, and program management at the base.

Hanscom is ready and able to welcome the influx of personnel and new missions the Air Force has planned for it. And so is Massachusetts. Our high-tech workforce, our world-class research institutions and universities, and our commercial investment in research and development make the Commonwealth well suited to support the high-technology mission of Hanscom. The Milliken Institute has singled out Massachusetts for its excellence in these fields. In its 2004 ranking of states by science and technology, Massachusetts received a “dominant” first place ranking.

Unfortunately, the Air Force wants to move two elements of the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) from Hanscom: the Battlespace Environment Division of the Space Vehicles Directorate and the Electromagnetic Technology Division of the Sensors Directorate. Doing so would be a mistake. The unique synergy and collaboration that occurs every day between AFRL and the high-tech community in and around Boston would be lost. Equally important, it is expected that of the 225 scientists and engineers who would be affected by relocating these missions, only about 10% would move—depriving the Air Force of one of its most vital assets—human capital.

This type of expertise does not come easily and is sustained by the cluster of high-technology companies, research universities, and professionals in the Boston area. If the professionals who run these programs and conduct this research refuse to move with their jobs, the impact on vital programs, including sensor fusion, automated target recognition, and space-situational awareness—all vital components of future military capability—will be disrupted. Hanscom—and the high-technology cluster around Boston—is the place for these missions.

Here in Boston we also have a military organization with an unfortunate name: the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard-Boston Detachment. This is a self-sustaining planning yard separate from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Their only association with Puget Sound is for administrative and accounting purposes. They provide engineering and design, logistics and planning support for the modernization and repair of U.S. naval vessels. They are the only Naval Engineering Activity to win a public/private competition in which the Navy recognized it could not afford to lose their expertise. Yet we still find

them on the list for closure. There are legitimate doubts about the Navy's calculation of military utility and cost savings that may be derived from the closure of the Boston Planning Yard—questions Congressman Lynch will examine in much greater detail. I urge you to give it the review it warrants.

I also want to say something about the Pentagon's recommendation to close Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. More than 100 Massachusetts residents work at Portsmouth—and the economic impact on my state is significant. But the case for Portsmouth goes beyond jobs and the economy—it's about a national asset that, once lost, will be forever gone.

In formulating its BRAC list, the Department of Defense had to make assumptions about the future nature of conflict and the future of naval force structure. That's true of any planning exercise, but it's particularly problematic in this instance since the Department of Defense is in the midst of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)—a review that will determine strategy, force structure, and organization for all the services. But without the benefit of the QDR's conclusions, the Department of Defense was left to make assumptions about the future needs of facilities like Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. And their conclusions were flawed.

Members of the commission have visited the shipyard. They know that it is a state of the art facility, honored for its quality workmanship and its efficiency. They know that it is a model for returning ships to the fleet on time and under budget. But the evidence suggests the Department of Defense failed to properly anticipate future requirements, the unique value of Portsmouth as a nuclear licensed shipyard, the expertise of its workforce, and the increasing reliance on submarines for a range of military missions—not just anti-submarine warfare.

Finally, I want to conclude with a request. Over the years, BRAC has taken more and more bases from the Northeast—a dangerous trend if you, like me, believe that our military must resemble the country it serves. Every time we lose a base in the Northeast, we lose that example of service—that tie to the nation. The bases we've discussed today stand on their own merit. But I hope you will also consider the damage done to the fabric of the nation every time a base is closed.

As Prepared For Delivery: WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**Testimony of Senator Edward M. Kennedy
New England Regional BRAC Commission Hearing
Boston Convention and Exposition Center
July 6, 2005**

Chairman Newton, Chairman Principi, Secretary Skinner, and General Turner, on behalf of Governor Romney and the Congressional delegation, welcome to Massachusetts, and thank you for being here today to discuss the BRAC proposals.

I have served on the Armed Services Committee for nearly 20 years, and have been through the BRAC process four times before. The BRAC process is carefully designed to decide whether certain bases can be closed to increase efficiencies for the Department of Defense, while preserving the essential military value. Congress designed the process to be accurate, open, and free from political influence.

In this BRAC, military value is especially important in light of our current national security needs. I have served as the Chairman of the Seapower subcommittee and our deliberations are guided by military value. We're proud of the role of our bases here in Massachusetts and for the most part, the current BRAC results show that.

We're very pleased with the decision to leave Hanscom and Natick open, and to bring additional jobs to Hanscom. The increase is a tribute to the high-quality work done at the base and the technology sector that supports it. Many from that sector are here to show their support. We are ready, willing, and able to perform that new mission, and will arrange a separate time to speak with you about these bases.

Our biggest disagreement is with the Pentagon's proposal to close Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. Otis has military value in spades and is essential to the defense of the entire New England region.

The 102nd at Otis has an outstanding history of keeping the nation safe. Its planes have patrolled our skies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year since 1972. In the Cold War, they intercepted Soviet planes within 250 nautical miles of the Long Island Coastline.

We've spoken with many former senior Air Force officials, and many were surprised that the BRAC list proposed closing Otis because of its strategic location. Planes here do not have to work in congested airspace, or wait to go supersonic. The base is the ideal place to prevent air attacks from Europe or across the pole against the many, many high-value strategic targets throughout the Northeast.

We've seen this again and again. On September 11th, fighters from Otis were the first to respond to attacks on the twin towers. Three months later, F-15s from Otis intercepted the plane with the shoe bomber and escorted it safely to Logan Airport, protecting us from that terrorist attack. Otis is the only base in the region on alert twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Knowing all this, when the list came out, we thought the decision to close Otis must be a mistake.

We dug into the data, and found that we were right. The decision to close Otis was based on several mistakes, which were substantial deviations from the BRAC criteria. The Air Force miscalculated Otis' military value score, by not giving full credit for the high-quality airspace, ramp space, and surge capacity. The military value formula did not adequately reflect the post-9/11 realities and left out homeland defense. Because of an erroneously low military value score, Otis was ignored when the Air Force decided it still needed a fighter presence in the Northeast.

The BRAC proposal would leave Boston unprotected, with only 2 planes on alert in a 175-mile radius. After September 11th, Otis began flying combat air patrols around-the-clock, for the next six months, keeping two planes in the air at all times, with two more prepared to launch, and two others that had just landed undergoing any needed repairs. Clearly, two planes are not enough to fulfill the mission.

Closing Otis will also undermine the Coast Guard Air Station on Cape Cod. In the last three years, the Coast Guard has flown over 900 search and rescue operations. A letter from the Commandant of the Coast Guard states that he faces a Hobson's choice - either find an additional \$25 million or more, or close down his fixed wing operations. Even though they were required to do so by law, the Air Force never asked him what the impact would be if Otis is closed.

Conceivably, that risk to homeland security might be offset if the Air Force could produce enough savings to meet our defense needs in other ways, but that's not the case. The Air Force also made errors in calculating the cost savings. As our presentation will show, the actual Air Force savings will be less than a tenth of what they claimed—a mere \$18 million over the next twenty years. That's a small price to pay to ensure the safety of New England and the nation.

These facts lead to only one conclusion – Otis should stay open.

5 minutes, 15 seconds
787 words