

July 22, 2005

BRAC Commission

JUL 25 2005

Received

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

Dear Chairman Principi,

On behalf of our constituents, we would like to thank you for your service in this important and difficult base realignment and closure process. We wholeheartedly agree with your statement that, *“Every dollar inappropriately assigned and located in the infrastructure is a dollar not available to provide the training that might save a Marine’s life, purchase munitions to win a soldier’s firefight or fund the advances that can ensure our continued dominance of the air and seas.”* We hope this letter will reassure you that we and our respective receiving communities share your commitment to the warfighter and stand ready to accept our responsibilities.

Many of us represent communities whose installations are losing or have lost missions, so we certainly can sympathize with our fellow citizens in Texarkana. However, we cannot allow emotion to detract us from our respective responsibilities to meet the compelling need to reduce excess infrastructure. The extent to which there is excess depot maintenance capacity is clearly shown in recommendations by both the Secretary of Defense in his certified recommendations and by Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey in his sworn testimony before you.

It is our firm conviction that we must reduce excess capacity to provide optimal utilization of the remaining capacity. Eliminating the excess will consolidate like missions, commodities, systems and the required skill sets necessary to operate efficiently. The DoD recommendation to close one Army Depot will retain ample surge capability within the remaining depots to meet warfighter requirements.

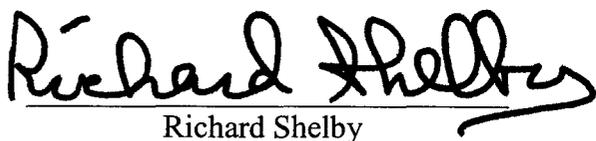
The three to six year transition period between your acceptance of the DoD recommendations and the final mission transfers will also provide the gaining depots more than sufficient time to ensure a timely and responsible transition with no degradation in readiness, as has been demonstrated with previous successful mission transfers. During this time, we pledge to you that we and our communities will give the transition process our close personal attention.

The consequence for failure to act now will be the eventual degradation in readiness of the entire defense industrial base when workload returns to peacetime levels. All depots will suffer. More importantly, our ability to equip the warfighter in the 20-year force structure and our goal of transforming underutilized facilities and infrastructure will be diminished as we divert precious funds from the warfighter.

Since no additional depots were added to the list for consideration for closure, your only opportunity to meet the compelling need to reduce excess capacity is to adopt the recommendations from the Department of Defense to close Red River Army Depot.

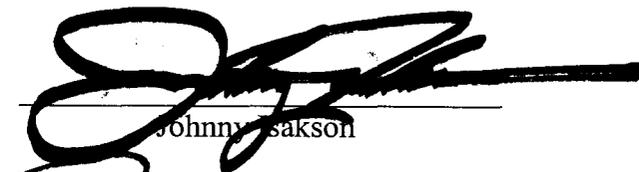
Again, thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity and make the hard but necessary decisions to improve and streamline our Nation's defense infrastructure. We greatly appreciate your service.

Sincerely,


Richard Shelby


Jeff Sessions


Saxby Chambliss


Johnny Isakson


Arlen Specter


Rick Santorum