

BRAC Commission

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

As we continue to analyze the New Jersey portion of the testimony at the July 8 BRAC hearing in Baltimore, MD, there are more and more questions without answers. In particular, the "megabase" proposal raised at the hearing is not well defined, it is incomplete, and the whole argument was conclusionary without facts and logic to support it.

The New Jersey proposal would create, by decree, a so-called megabase. Neither operations, real estate, nor facilities on Fort Dix, Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station, or McGuire Air Force Base would change except for a sign. This was presented as increasing jointness, but there was not even a suggestion that there would be any change in operations at any of the separate locations. At Fort Dix, for example, the mission is to prepare soldiers for deployment, primarily to combat areas. And it is receiving greater mobilization responsibility under the DoD's realignment recommendation. It is hard to imagine Fort Dix taking on a test role that would permit outside organizations from Ft Monmouth to tap people and interrupt that crucial training. One can imagine that an administrative consolidation of headquarters functions might save a few overhead spaces but the proposal should be given at least the same level of analysis as was given to the basic DoD recommendations. The proposal offered no improved facilities, no common operating philosophy, and the individual bases are just as distinct.

It was recommended that the Air Force have command of the megabase, but that alone does not create jointness. Jointness is enhanced when similar requirements and functions make use of the same procedures and facilities. For example, Aberdeen Proving Ground tests both Navy and USMC waterborne equipment, and both Army and Air Force airdrop equipment, using the same facilities and test support personnel. The Dix-Lakehurst-McGuire (DLM) Megabase would still have different people doing

different things. And, despite the claim that DLM would create >60,000 acres in close proximity, close is not always useful. When you have to stop a vehicle, or shut off a radio signal, and repackage a system to cross a civilian street or move from one property to another, “close” is still very far apart. Put simply, the DLM Megabase proposal is a smoke screen, with no increase in military value.

The New Jersey testimony spoke at length about errors in the DoD calculations of costs to move and the costs to replace personnel. The basis for much of that discussion was work done by Bliss & Associates, a firm of 4 people (as listed on their web site) local to Fort Monmouth in nearby Wayne, NJ. The relevant question is not whether another model can produce different numbers, but whether the output can be correlated with data developed in great detail over a two year period by DoD. As required by law, the Government Accountability Office has published its analysis of the DoD selection process and recommendations.<sup>1</sup> It had criticism, but also confirmation. These GAO statements are relevant:

- “DOD’s process relied on certified data.”<sup>2</sup> During the BRAC process, data were certified by senior officials at DOD installations. Each official certified that the information was accurate and complete to the best of his or her knowledge and belief.
- “...the DOD Inspector General and the military service audit agencies...generally found the data sufficiently reliable to support BRAC decision making.”<sup>3</sup>
- “...the COBRA model was designed to provide consistency across the military services...[and DOD]...has improved upon its design to provide better estimating capability. In our past and current reviews of the COBRA model, we found it to be a generally reasonable estimator for comparing potential costs and savings among various BRAC options.”<sup>4</sup>

The emphasis of the New Jersey testimony on a single point estimate, generated by a proprietary process which cannot be reliably compared to other figures, does not offer a sound basis for decision making.

One of DoD’s goals is to concentrate life cycle program management into four centers. The New Jersey proposal nullifies that approach and creates a single

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of DOD’s 2005 Selection Process and Recommendations for Base Closures and Realignment, Government Accountability Office, GAO-05-785. July 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Page 5.

<sup>3</sup> Page 6.

<sup>4</sup> Page 32.

outlier organization. There is no substantive logic offered for doing so, other than a new set of independent and unverified numbers.

Finally, the New Jersey testimony alluding to construction costs for new facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground gave no consideration to the use of space which will be made available by the departure of the Ordnance Center and Schools – 2,171,031 square feet of facilities – and failed to acknowledge that DoD has already considered and factored in essential construction of new facilities.

We respectfully ask that you take these facts into consideration during your deliberations.

Sincerely,

  
Wyatt H. Colclasure II  
President