DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEDIA BRIEFING BOOK

PORTLAND, OREGON REGIONAL HEARING

A. Media Advisory

Portland International Airport Air Guard Station, OR
- B. Suggested Talking Points for Installation Visit
- C. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- D. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC

Umatilla Army Depot, OR
- E. Suggested Talking Points for Installation Visit
- F. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- G. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC

Mountain Home Air Force Base, ID
- H. Suggested Talking Points for Installation Visit
- I. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- J. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC

McChord Air Force Base, WA
- K. Suggested Talking Points for Installation Visit
- L. Suggested Qs & As for Installation Visit
- M. Sampling of Local Media Coverage Relating to BRAC

2005 BRAC Commission Schedule

Base Realignment and Closure Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
15 JUNE 2005
Contact: Robert McCreary
Deputy Director of Communications
703 – 699 – 2964
Robert.mccreary@wso.whs.mil

Media Advisory for 2005 BRAC Regional Hearing in Portland, Oregon

DATE: Friday, June 17

LOCATION:
Eastside Federal Complex
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon

PARTICIPATING STATES:
Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho

BRAC COMMISSIONERS: Chairman Anthony Principi, Honorable James Bilbray, Honorable Philip Coyle, and Honorable James Hansen.

TIME: Doors Open to Public at 7:15AM

Hearing Coverage- 1st Floor Auditorium
8:30AM – 12:00PM / **PRE-SET 6:00AM**

Media Availability – Center Courtyard of Federal Complex
As each State completes their presentation they will hold a media avail. The BRAC Commission's media avail will begin promptly 15 minutes after the end of the hearing.

Logistical information for media
-Satellite truck parking available on 11th street
-600 ft. Cable run to press risers
-65 ft. Max camera throw
-TV quality sound and lighting

Credentialing and Media Inquiries: Contact: James Schaefer – 703-901-7793
Email: James.schaefer@wso.whs.mil

Please visit our website, www.brac.gov, for more information and future updates.

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2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points for Visit to Portland International Airport Air Guard Station

1. **Military value is the most important consideration to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) as the Commission evaluates the suggestion made by the Department of Defense (DoD) to realign Portland Air Guard Station.**
    - While the Commission will evaluate the economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure of the installation could have on the surrounding community but the most important consideration in the Commission's evaluation is the military value of the installation.
    - The Commission understands the unique role that the Portland Air Guard Station serves in the Pacific Northwest both as a defender and a projector of force. The installation's military value, as such, will be taken into full account by the Commission.

2. **The Commission is aware of the human impact that the suggestion to realign Portland Air Guard Station could have, should the suggestion be enacted.**
    - The Congress established the Commission as an independent entity to ensure that all critical factors have been evaluated, and that the effects on the surrounding community have been taken into account in the decision to recommend a base for closure or realignment.
    - The Commission will evaluate the economic impact that the installation realignment would have on the larger Portland area surrounding the base, while basing its decision almost entirely upon military value.
    - The Portland Air guard Station has served in a unique role in the defense of the nation. Home to one of the most technologically advanced F-15 fighter wings, the Pacific Northwest and the nation have benefited from the projection of air power resident at the Portland Air Guard Station. The Commission will analyze Portland Air Guard Station's future role in light of the DoD's recommendations.
    - The Commission is aware that Portland's proximity to the border with Canada necessitates the mission of border defense. Portland Air Guard Station has been very successful at this mission in the past. The Commission will analyze this role and make a recommendation based upon the military value of the installation.

3. **The Congress established the Commission as a non-political, transparent, and independent entity to perform a thorough evaluation, through a process set out by law, of the bases suggested for closure or realignment by DoD.**
    - The Commission serves to ensure that all pertinent factors have been evaluated and that the impact that the suggestions to close or realign a base would have on the surrounding community, have been taken into full account.
    - The Commission encourages community input. The public may submit comments directly through the Commission's official website: www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Q's & A's for Visit to Portland International Airport Air Guard Station

Q1. The combined proposed cuts for military presence in the State of Oregon are substantial. Estimates suggest that roughly 1,083 jobs would be lost in Oregon. Most of these jobs are located at the Portland International Airport Air Guard Station. Does the Commission consider the economic ramifications of the proposed realignment?
A1. The Commission will follow a process, set forth by law, in evaluating the bases, suggested by the Department of Defense (DoD), for closure or realignment. The Commission places priority on military value, while also taking into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of a base would have on the community surrounding that base. Part of has constituted DoD's determination of military value is jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in meeting today's changing global threats. The Commission is completely open and transparent, and with exception of material sensitive to national security, all information received or used by the Commission will be made publicly accessible. The purpose of the Commission is to ensure that all pertinent factors have been carefully evaluated, as prescribed by law.

Q2. Under the current recommendation, the Portland Air Guard station stands to lose 452 civilian and 112 military jobs. In addition, the installation will lose 23 active aircraft—15 F-15s of the 142nd Fighter Wing and 8 KC-135R tankers of the 939th Air Refueling Wing. According to some, the transfer of these aircraft would leave the entire Pacific Northwest vulnerable to air attack. Will the Commission consider the homeland defense ramifications of the DoD recommendations?
A2. The Commission places utmost importance, in making its recommendation, on the military value of an installation. As DoD attempts to transform the military to face changing global threats, the Commission will review the Department's recommendations in an objective manner to determine a base's military value in this role. The Commission understands the significance of this particular recommendation and will perform a full evaluation.

Q3. Strategically, Oregon's role in securing the nation's borders and protecting the United States from terrorist and non-conventional threats has been considered vital. Doesn't the role of the Portland Air Guard Station serve well in the DoD's efforts to transform the military to face the threats of the 21st Century?
A3. The most critical consideration in the Commission's evaluation is military value of the installation. The Commission will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider other factors. DoD developed its standard of military value based upon jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in today's changing global threats. Oregon is a unique and valuable state in location. The Commission will consider this factor in its final recommendation to the President.

Q4. Under the proposed realignment, the Portland Air Guard Station would retain the 142nd's expeditionary combat support elements and the 244th and 272nd Combat Communications Squadron. As such, the base would retain two F-15s on alert status. Will the Commission evaluate whether or not this would negatively affect U.S. defense?

A4. The Commission will perform a thorough, accurate, and objective analysis which will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider other factors. The Commission will not comment on issues of a strategic nature as this is out of the purview prescribed by law. Please be assured that the Commission will make a full evaluation, as prescribed by law, before coming to its conclusions and formulating its suggestions.

Q5. In addition to the primary estimates concerning job loss through realignment of the base, additional estimates predict that the base will lose about 1,200 part-time Guard airmen and reservists, who would report to other units. Does the Commission recognize that the economic ramifications of base realignment/closure could extend well-beyond initial estimates?

A5. The Commission will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider other factors. The Commission understands the significant economic impact that realignment of a base can have on a community. Communities and military installations form an economic/social synergy and become progressively dependent on one another over time. As such, the Commission will carefully review the economic impact of each DoD recommendation.

Q6. Under the current recommendation, the Portland International Airport Air Guard Station is slated to lose the 939th Air Refueling Wing. The 939th Air Refueling Wing has made significant infrastructure improvements to the base and served as the replacement unit following the transfer of aircraft from the 939th air rescue wing in 2003. Will the Commission consider the economic value of maintaining the 939th Air Refueling Wing in Portland?

A6. Primarily the Commission will consider the military value of the base. The Commission will also take into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of a base would have on the community surrounding that base. In addition, the Commission will analyze the capability of an installation's infrastructure to accept an infusion of resources.

Q7. How can the Community make the Commission aware of information that the Community feels may have been overlooked by DoD?

A7. The BRAC Commission encourages community input into this transparent and objective process. The public may submit comments through the Commission's official website, which is www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

PORTLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE
PORTLAND, OREGON

National News Articles
Base closure commission to hold hearing in Portland
Oregon delegation seeks to protect military installations
Oregon to lose more than 1,000 military personnel under Pentagon plan
Lawmakers vow to fight Pentagon plan to strip Portland air base
Gov. Kulongoski Comments on BRAC Recommendations

Local News Articles
Portland Air Guard Base, Umatilla Depot On Hit List (Portland, OR)
Base-closing plans aired (Bend, OR)
Oregon, Washington bases are on closure list
Army would end 156-year presence at Vancouver site (Vancouver, WA)
Pentagon targets 1,083 Oregon jobs (Salem, OR)
PDX Air Base Closure Could Affect Homeland Security

Opinions/ Editorials
The Loss of a Reassuring Roar (Portland, OR)
Slimming the military: States gear up for fight over base closures (Eugene, OR)

National News Articles

Base closure commission to hold hearing in Portland
The Associated Press
Mary Clare Jalonick
May 19, 2005

The commission reviewing the Pentagon's recommended base closings will travel to 16 cities this summer - including Portland - to hear from communities potentially affected.

Between June 7 and July 14, commissioners will hold hearings in Salt Lake City; St. Louis; Dallas; Atlanta; Boston; Los Angeles; Fairbanks, Alaska; Rapid City, S.D.; Grand Forks, N.D.; Clovis, N.M.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Charlotte, N.C.; Baltimore; San Antonio and New Orleans, as well as Portland.

The Portland hearing is scheduled June 17 at a location to be determined.

Under a plan released Friday by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, the Umatilla Chemical Depot in Eastern Oregon and a Navy Reserve Center in Southern Oregon would be closed, and the Air National Guard base in Portland significantly reduced.

Oregon lawmakers say the plan to transfer 452 civilian and 112 military jobs from the Portland base - as well as remove its 23 active planes - could leave the region vulnerable to attack.

Under the plan, all 15 F-15 fighter jets operated by the 142nd Fighter Wing would be transferred to New Jersey and Louisiana, and eight KC-135R tankers flown by the 939th Air Refueling Wing would go to Oklahoma and Kansas. Some jobs now in Portland would be transferred to California.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., whose district includes the Portland air base, said he was glad the commission will be holding a hearing in Portland.

"This should be a valuable opportunity to explore how best to meet the homeland defense needs of our region," he said.

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, known as BRAC, can change the Pentagon list before it is submitted to the White House and Congress this fall.

"The regional hearings will provide the primary means for communities to educate the commissioners and their staff on their disagreements with the DOD base recommendations," said former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, chairman of the commission.

Commissioner Lloyd Warren Newton, a retired Air Force general, will tour New Jersey's Fort Monmouth, members of the New Jersey delegation said Thursday.

The Pentagon tried to close Fort Monmouth in 1988 and 1993, but an intense lobbying effort by congressional, state and local officials kept the post open.

Members of the South Dakota delegation said Thursday that three commissioners - former Democratic Rep. James H. Bilbray of Nevada, former Assistant Secretary of Defense Philip Coyle and former Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner - would visit Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City on the same day as the South Dakota hearing.

Rep. Stephanie Herseth, D-S.D., said the Thursday announcement "gives us some lead time" to prepare for the visit and craft the best argument for saving Ellsworth, which the Pentagon recommended for closure.

"It's a matter of now really putting scrutiny on their data and analysis," she said.

North Dakota Sen. Byron Dorgan said his state would use the Grand Forks hearing to lobby for additional missions for Grand Forks Air Force base, which would lose its air tanker mission and most of its personnel.

"We would like to add some additional missions and minimize the impact," Dorgan said.

Gov. George Pataki of New York said Thursday that he would testify at the Buffalo hearing in an effort to spare Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station from closure.

"We fought successfully back in 1995 during the last BRAC round to save the Niagara Air Reserve Station from being closed, and we're going to fight hard to save it again," he said.

Oregon delegation seeks to protect military installations
The Associated Press
Matthew Daly
May 9, 2005

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oregon lawmakers have sent letters to the head of a base-closing commission asking him to spare the state's military installations.

Sens. Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith and Rep. Greg Walden said Air National Guard bases in Portland and Klamath Falls "play a crucial role in securing the nation's borders and protecting the United States from terrorist and non-conventional threats."

The letter cited the 142nd Fighter Wing and 939th Air Refueling Wing, both based at Portland International Airport, and the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls.

They also asked that the Army's Umatilla chemical weapons depot in eastern Oregon be spared.

All four units provide crucial services, the lawmakers said in a letter to former Veteran Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, who heads the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Walden and Smith are Republicans, while Wyden is a Democrat.

The state's four Democratic House members, meanwhile, sent a similar letter to Principi. The letter, from Reps. David Wu, Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio and Darlene Hooley, is virtually identical to the Wyden-Smith-Walden letter, except that it leaves out mention of the Umatilla depot.

The depot, one of eight sites around the country storing the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons, has about 7.4 million pounds of deadly nerve and blister agents in a variety of munitions.

The facility began destruction of its weapons last fall under orders by Congress and an international treaty. The Army is also destroying weapons stored in Utah, Alabama and Maryland.

Penny Dodge, a spokeswoman for DeFazio, said the House Democrats were concerned that, in light of Army discussions earlier this year about bringing in weapons from other states, a letter that endorsed a long-term role for Umatilla could "inadvertently fuel the Army's interest in shipping weapons into Oregon from out of state for incineration."

The letters from the Oregon delegation came as Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said he foresees a much smaller round of base closings and consolidations than previously expected.

Rumsfeld is to submit his list of recommended closures and realignments to the independent panel, known as BRAC, no later than May 16. His recommendations may be announced this week, officials say.

Andrew Blotky, a spokesman for Wyden, said that Wyden and other lawmakers are especially concerned about the preserving National Guard and Reserve units. Many Oregon Guard and Reserve members have served in Iraq and other war zones, he noted.

"Sen. Wyden feels very strongly that the Oregon National Guard has served a number of important missions and he is committed to seeing that the Guard units remain up and running," Blotky said.

For the past few years, the Pentagon has said it had 20 percent to 25 percent more U.S. base capacity than needed for the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

But in a conference call with newspaper editorial writers last week, Rumsfeld said the surplus is not nearly as large as had been estimated, in part because tens of thousands of U.S. troops will be brought home from bases in Asia and Europe.

Oregon to lose more than 1,000 military personnel under Pentagon plan
The Associated Press
Matthew Daly
May 13, 2005

Oregon would lose more than 1,000 military personnel and all Portland-based F-15 fighter jets would be transferred to other states under a major base closure and realignment plan announced Friday.

According to a list released by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, the Umatilla Chemical Depot near Hermiston and the Naval Reserve Center in Central Point would be closed, and the Air National Guard base in Portland would be significantly reduced in size.

The plan drew immediate fire from some members of Oregon's congressional delegation, including Republican Sen. Gordon Smith. They worried about the loss of jobs and protecting the state.

Smith and Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden issued a joint statment.

"I'm going to have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place," said Wyden. "I'm not going to allow our state to become a sacrifice zone in an era of increased homeland security needs."

Before any changes are made, Smith added, "The Pentagon is going to have to justify its decisions. I am going to review these recommendations closely. I want to ensure that Oregonians will be safe and that our communities receive all the help available to recover economically if this plan goes through."

Rep. Peter DeFazio, a member of the House Homeland Security Committee, also objected to the plan.

"I have a hard time understanding how the military can effectively maintain Homeland Defense in Oregon and the Pacific coast, when they're moving all the operational capabilities away from the Portland Air Guard Station," said DeFazio, D-Ore.

The BRAC process is difficult to stop once it gets started, DeFazio said, but added: "I plan to work with my colleagues in the delegation to protect the Portland Air Guard station from being dismantled."

The Umatilla depot would lose 512 employees, while the Guard base at Portland International Airport would lose 564 employees.

Mary Binder, spokeswoman for the depot, said Friday's announcement was expected because the depot was slated to close anyway after it was finished destroying its chemical weapons under an international treaty.

However, realignments at the Air National Guard base in Oregon's largest city would bring major changes.

The Portland-based 939th Air Refueling Wing would be moved entirely to Oklahoma, California, and Kansas.

And the majority of the 142nd Air Wing, including all the F-15 fighter jets, would be moved to bases in New Jersey and Louisiana, members of Congress said.

The Portland base would keep the 142nd's expeditionary combat support elements and the 244th and 272nd Combat Communications Squadrons.

The Navy Reserve Center in Central Point in southern Oregon is based in an old elementary school and employs one officer and six enlisted people to oversee the training of about 70 reservists, who drill one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Their assignments include a Seabee construction battalion, a coastal warfare squadron in San Diego and a submarine tender based at Guam, said Lt. Cmdr. David Quirk, the commanding officer.

An Air National Guard base in Klamath Falls, home of the 173rd Fighter Wing, would not be affected by the plan. The Klamath Falls base is one of only two in the country that teaches pilots to fly F-15s.

The Umatilla depot, one of eight sites around the country storing the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons, has about 7.4 million pounds of deadly nerve and blister agents in a variety of munitions.

The facility began destruction of its weapons last fall under orders by Congress and an international treaty.

DeFazio said the announcement that the Army will shut down operations at Umatilla after they finish weapons incineration in 2010 or 2011 was actually good news.

"The better news is that they don't plan to ship more weapons to northeast Oregon," he said.

A spokeswoman for Gov. Ted Kulongoski said this week that the governor believes the Portland and Klamath Falls bases are very important to Oregon. Kulongoski has been in discussions with the congressional delegation "to convey that the bases need to stay open," spokeswoman Anna Richter Taylor said.

Lawmakers vow to fight Pentagon plan to strip Portland air base
The Associated Press
Matthew Daly
May 13, 2005

Oregon lawmakers are vowing to fight a Pentagon plan that would remove more than 1,000 military and civilian personnel from the state, and transfer all Portland-based F-15 fighter jets to other states.

Under a plan released Friday by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, the Umatilla Chemical Depot in Eastern Oregon and a Navy Reserve Center in Southern Oregon would be closed, and the Air National Guard base in Portland would be significantly reduced.

Lawmakers from throughout the state said the plan to transfer 452 civilian and 112 military jobs from the Portland base - as well as remove its 23 active planes - could leave the region vulnerable to attack.

Under the plan, all 15 F-15 fighter jets operated by the 142nd Fighter Wing would be transferred to New Jersey and Louisiana, and eight KC-135R tankers flown by the 939th Air Refueling Wing would go to Oklahoma and Kansas. Some jobs now in Portland would be transferred to California.

The plan would save the Air Force $100 million over 20 years and upgrade military readiness, the Pentagon said in a report accompanying the closure plan. Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma and Forbes Field Air Guard Station in Kansas have a higher military value than Portland, the report said, as does the 177th Fighter Wing in Atlantic City, N.J.

The 159th Fighter Wing in New Orleans has a lower military value than Portland, but "realigning aircraft from Portland creates another optimum-sized fighter squadron at New Orleans," the report said.

Oregon lawmakers strongly disagreed.

The proposed realignment "doesn't make sense," said Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-Ore. "The Portland Air Guard Center is a strategic hub, and diminishing its mission runs counter to adequately protecting the region's security. The benefit of its current function far outweighs any possible savings that might come from realignment."

Republican Sen. Gordon Smith and Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden issued a joint statement condemning the plan.

"I'm going to have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place," said Wyden. "I'm not going to allow our state to become a sacrifice zone in an era of increased homeland security needs."

Before any changes are made, Smith added, "The Pentagon is going to have to justify its decisions. I am going to review these recommendations closely. I want to ensure that Oregonians will be safe and that our communities receive all the help available to recover economically if this plan goes through."

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., a member of the House Homeland Security Committee, said he had a hard time understanding how the military can effectively maintain homeland defense in Oregon and the Pacific Coast, when officials plan to move operational capabilities away from the Portland air base.

Democratic Rep. Earl Blumenauer, whose district includes Portland International Airport, where the Guard station is based, said the state had presented strong evidence to the Pentagon about the importance of Portland's military facilities.

"I continue to think that the configuration we've had with the Air Refueling Wing makes the most sense," he said in a statement. "Our task now is to make sure that we do everything possible to make our case about the importance of the facilities here in Oregon and to ensure the Pentagon is making the right decision for our military and for Oregon."

Gov. Ted Kulongoski said he has "major, major concerns" about scaling down the Portland base.

"This puts our efforts at homeland security at risk," he told The Associated Press, adding that the Portland Air Guard unit is considered "the best in competency" in the nation.

Mary Binder, spokeswoman for the Umatilla depot, said Friday's announcement was expected because the depot was slated to close anyway after it was finished destroying its chemical weapons under an international treaty. The depot would lose 512 employees under the Pentagon plan.

The Portland air base would keep the 142nd's expeditionary combat support elements and the 244th and 272nd Combat Communications Squadrons.

The Navy Reserve Center in Central Point in southern Oregon is based in an old elementary school and employs one officer and six enlisted people to oversee the training of about 70 reservists, who drill one weekend a month and two weeks a year.

An Air National Guard base in Klamath Falls, home of the 173rd Fighter Wing, would not be affected by the plan. The Klamath Falls base is one of only two in the country that teaches pilots to fly F-15s.

The Umatilla depot, one of eight sites around the country storing the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons, has about 7.4 million pounds of deadly nerve and blister agents in a variety of munitions.

The facility began destruction of its weapons last fall under orders by Congress and an international treaty.

DeFazio said the announcement that the Army will shut down operations at Umatilla after they finish weapons incineration in 2010 or 2011 was actually good news.

"The better news is that they don't plan to ship more weapons to northeast Oregon," he said.

Rep Greg Walden, R-Ore., said he hopes to expand the Klamath Falls base, noting that a realigned base in Florida has a similar training function and could have some of its planes and personnel transferred to Oregon.

The nine-member BRAC commission, headed by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, will review Rumsfeld's proposals and make final recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. If Bush accepts the panel's list, it will move to Congress for final consideration before the end of the year.

Gov. Kulongoski Comments on BRAC Recommendations
US Fed News
May 13, 2005

Statement by Gov. Kulongoski on BRAC Recommendations:

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's recommendations today not only have a direct impact on Oregon's economy, but also risk compromising our homeland security efforts in the Pacific Northwest.

The 142nd is the premier F-15 fighter wing in our national air defense system and the only unit responsible for carrying out the homeland air defense mission in the Pacific Northwest. The BRAC makes no recommendation for how that critical mission will be filled.

The recommendations today will also strip the Portland Air Base of all aircraft including the 939th air refueling wing, which had made substantial infrastructure improvements to the base and served as the replacement unit following the transfer of aircraft from the 939th rescue wing in April 2003.

I will continue to work closely with the congressional delegation and communicate directly with the Chair of the BRAC commission and the Secretary of Defense regarding our concerns. To that end I will be joining our congressional delegation in inviting the commission members to come to Portland and see the Portland Airbase firsthand.

Local News Articles

Portland Air Guard Base, Umatilla Depot On Hit List
The Oregonian (Portland, OR)
Harry Esteve
May 17, 2005

Summary: Oregon leaders are alarmed by the Pentagon's proposed base closures and cutbacks

The roar of F-15 fighter jets would be silenced over Portland, and Oregon would lose more than 1,000 jobs under a proposed list of military base closures and cutbacks released Friday.

The proposal, offered by U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, is part of a sweeping rearrangement by the armed forces to modernize the military to face terrorists rather than the Soviet army. The Defense Department estimated the move would save $48.8 billion over 20 years

Rumsfeld wants to close 180 military installations, including 33 major bases. The report Friday also called for downsizing and merging hundreds of other smaller bases. The proposal, which

prompted cries of outrage from congressional delegations in Oregon and throughout the nation, will go to a federal commission for review.

If approved, the closures and shifts would begin next year but could be phased in over as many as six years.

"Our current arrangement, designed for the Cold War, must give way to the new demands of the war against extremism and other evolving 21st century challenges," Rumsfeld said in a written statement accompanying his recommendations.

Noteworthy among the closings were Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and Fort Monmouth in New Jersey. Many of the operations would be moved elsewhere.

In Oregon, the proposal targets aircraft and personnel at the Portland Air National Guard base, home of the 142nd Fighter Wing and the 939th Air Refueling Wing. It also recommends closure of the Umatilla Chemical Weapons Depot. All 18 of the Air Guard's F-15 fighter jets would be moved to bases in Atlantic City and New Orleans. The 939th's eight KC-135 jets would be split between bases in Oklahoma and Kansas.

Operation and maintenance crews would follow the jets. In all, the Portland base would lose 452 civilian and 112 military employees. It also stands to lose about 1,200 part-time Guard airmen and reservists, who would report to other units.

"This represents a significant loss for the Oregon National Guard," said Guard spokesman Mike Braibish. "We're talking about one of the nation's premier F-15 fighter wings,"

The Umatilla depot would lose 385 civilian workers and 127 military employees. Also slated for closure in Oregon is the Navy Reserve Center in Central Pont, which would mean the loss of seven jobs.

In Clark County, the Vancouver Barracks, an Army reserve post, would be closed for a loss of 45 jobs. As a whole, Washington would gain more military jobs than it loses under the proposal.

Oregon political and military leaders reacted with alarm to the proposal and vowed to fight against losses at the Portland air base. If approved, the closures and transfers would further shrink Oregon's already small connection to the military.

"It not only has a direct impact on the region's economy, it also puts our efforts on homeland security at risk," Gov. Ted Kulongoski said shortly after learning the contents of the proposal. "They are the best F-15 unit in the United States. And I think trying to replace them is going to be very, very difficult."

Friday's announcement triggers the first round of a process known as Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC. The list now goes to a presidentially appointed commission that can add to or subtract bases before sending it to President Bush. If the president signs off on the closure list, Congress can either reject it in its entirety or let it become law. The closures are expected to begin next year and can take up to six years to complete.

Oregon Guard officials said they hope the BRAC commission might change some of the recommendations. During past base closures, the commission dropped as many as a quarter of the

recommended bases from the list, said Col. Brad Applegate, commander of the Portland Air Guard unit.

"We'll just wait and see," he said. Asked about the governor's statement on homeland defense risks, Applegate said, "You can all come to your own conclusions on whether we're more safe or less safe."

Maj. James R. Wilson, spokesman for the 939th Air Refueling Wing, said his staff was taken aback by the announcement.

"We've known this was a possibility," Wilson said, "but it still came as a shock." Commanders at the air base met with the staff and delivered the news Friday morning.

"It's somber around here," Wilson said. "But we'll get though this. The Air Force will take care of its people."

The Portland air base will remain open, Applegate emphasized. Two support units will remain active on the base. However, if the transfers go through as planned, the base will have only two "alert" jets on standby in case of a military emergency, Applegate said. Hee said he doesn't know who will be assigned to fly the jets.

Closing the Umatilla depot and shifting operations out of the Portland air base would save an estimated $75 million a year, according the report.

The Umatilla depot, one of eight sites around the country storing the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons, has about 7.4 million pounds of deadly nerve and blister agents in a variety of munitions. The facility began destruction of its weapons last fall under order by Congress and an international treaty.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., whose district includes the Umatilla base, said Friday's announcement was expected because the depot was slated to close anyway after it was finished destroying its chemical weapons.

"As near as I can tell, it's where we wanted to end up -- finish the mission and close the base," Walden said. "You don't want to keep that open and operating for the rest of the country to use."

The bigger concerns centered on the Portland air base.

"I'm going to have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place," said U.S. Sen. Wyden. D-Ore. "I'm not going to allow our state to become a sacrifice zone in an era of increased homeland security needs."

Base-closing plans aired
The Bend Bulletin (Bend, OR)
Monica Mercer
May 14, 2005

WASHINGTON — The proposed closing of the Umatilla Chemical Depot and other Oregon military sites might mean the loss of hundreds of jobs and the movement of fighters and air tankers from Portland to other states.

The Defense Department announced Friday that the depot in the Pendleton-Hermiston area and the Navy Reserve Center in Central Point have been recommended for closure for the first time under the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990.

In addition, the department's recommendations include the shift in mission, or realignment, of the Portland International Airport Air Guard Station.

Military and civilian personnel could be hit with a total projected loss of 1,083 jobs statewide.

However, that projection could change as implementation of the department's recommendations takes place over the next five years. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will review the recommendations to close the two Oregon installations during the summer.

The state's congressional delegation sent letters to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the commissioner of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission last week detailing the importance of Oregon's military installations. As late as Thursday, Rep. Greg Walden's office said there was no reason to think that Oregon would be affected by the recommended closings.

But now Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., says he'll "have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place."

The commission has until September to submit its final list of recommendations for nationwide base closures and realignments to President Bush, who will submit it to Congress for final consideration by the end of the year.

Oregon escaped the previous four rounds of closures. Umatilla went through realignment in 1988 when it ended its storage of traditional warfare such as bombs and bullets.

The Defense Department has confirmed that there is no further use for the Umatilla Chemical Depot and that it will not receive any additional workload at its destruction facility. It will cost $15.5 million to shut down the depot, but the savings during the implementation period will be $89.1 million, according to the Defense Department.

As many as 884 Umatilla jobs could be permanently lost, which amounts to about 2 percent of Pendleton-Hermiston area employment. Binder estimated that the entire process for carrying out the depot's mission, including environmental cleanup and fulfilling state permit requirements, will be completed by 2015.

Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., said the Pentagon will have to justify the new decision regarding Oregon.

Umatilla Army Public Affairs Officer Mary Binder called the Defense Department's recommendation "not surprising" since the community has long known Umatilla's only mission now is to destroy a finite amount of chemical warfare. The process must be completed by 2012.

The movement of certain aircraft from Portland's air guard station to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma and Forbes Field in Kansas is because those installations have "higher military value," according to the Defense Department. All 15 F-15 fighter jets operated by the 142nd Fighter Wing would be transferred to New Jersey and Louisiana, and eight KC-135R tankers flown by the 939th Air Refueling Wing would go to Oklahoma and Kansas.

The 1,018 jobs that could permanently be lost in the Portland area represent only 0.1 percent of area employment. Further, the Defense Department said it would save $100.2 million over 20 years if the Portland realignment takes place.

Closures and realignments nationwide are a result of the Base Closure and Realignment Act as amended in 1990. The law came on the heels of a 20-year plan for modernizing military infrastructure and the Defense Department's inventory of all its facilities.

Defense has always maintained that its criteria for making recommendations give "paramount importance to an installation's military value."

Oregon, Washington bases are on closure list
KATU
May 13, 2005

Two military facilities in Oregon will close and the Oregon Air National Guard base at the Portland International Airport will be significantly reduced in size, according to a list made public today by U.S. military planners.

In Washington State, some small posts will close, but large bases will actually benefit as staff numbers increase to handle shifting workloads.

The Umatilla Army Depot in Oregon is slated for closure, as is the Naval Reserve Center in Central Point. The Air National Guard station at the Portland airport will shed over 500 military and civilian jobs as it is downsized.

The destruction of chemical weapons at the Umatilla Depot will continue until the project is completed.

The military term for changes in staffing at bases not slated for closure is "realignment".

In total, Oregon will lose over 1,000 military and civilian jobs due to closures and the Portland National Guard Base realignment.

Meanwhile, Washington is looking at a net gain of over 700 jobs.

The latest round of base closures are expected to save the federal goverment $49 billion over 20 years.

The closures must still be approved by Congress and signed by President Bush. Passage of the proposed closures and realignments is expected in the fall.

Army would end 156-year presence at Vancouver site
The Columbian (Vancouver, WA)
Dean Baker
May 14, 2005

The Defense Department moved Friday to end the Army's 156-year presence at Vancouver Barracks and to transfer from Portland to four other states an Oregon Air National Guard jet fighter wing and an Air Force Reserve refueling fleet.

Moving the 15 F-15 Eagle jet fighters, the eight KC-135R refueling planes, and the troops and civilians who support them would cut at least 609 full-time and 1,270 part-time jobs from the metro-area military payroll.

It would also leave the Vancouver-Portland area with only two F-15s to protect it on a moment's notice from any threatening aircraft. The closest other F-15s would have to come from Klamath Falls, Ore.

About 35 percent of the affected military and civilian employees who work at the Portland base live in Clark County, said Col. Bradley Applegate, commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, which is marked for transfer. Applegate lives in Clark County.

Forty-five of the lost jobs would be at the barracks in Vancouver; the others at the air base south of Portland International Airport at 6801 N.E. Cornfoot Road.

None of this will happen suddenly.

The changes may take as long as eight years, officials said. They require the approval of both Congress and the president. They are designed to fit with other changes nationally to consolidate military operations, free more troops for combat and improve efficiency.

The changes at Portland call for the 939th Air Refueling Wing to move four airplanes to California and Kansas, while the jets would move to New Jersey and Louisiana, Applegate said.

The Portland base would remain open at greatly reduced strength, supporting the 244th and 272nd Combat Communications Squadrons and the 123rd Weather Flight.

In Vancouver, the plan is to move the headquarters of the Army Reserve's 104th Division (Institutional Training) to Fort Lewis, Maj. Gen. Terrill Moffett said in a phone interview from Phoenix.

"Other units at Vancouver Barracks might go to a new facility, maybe at Camp Rilea (on the northern Oregon Coast)," said Moffett, commander of the 104th. It's also possible a new facility could be built in Clark County for some units, he said.

"That's just not known yet," Moffett said.

The Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Facility is located at Warrenton on U.S. Highway 101 between Astoria and Seaside.

New installation?

Rep. Brian Baird, D-Vancouver, said in a press release, however, that a proposal is alive to move some Vancouver Barracks troops to an installation to be built in Vancouver.

Moffett said he hasn't been able to determine how much money might be saved by moving the military out of the barracks. The move means hundreds of part-time soldiers would no longer train each month at Vancouver Barracks.

Despite the losses proposed for Southwest Washington, Gov. Christine Gregoire said the Pentagon's base realignment and closure plan is "a great success" for Washington as a whole.

"We wanted to avoid realignments of base missions that would have large economic impacts," she said in a statement. "There are some realignments, but we were able to avoid major problems."

Sen. Maria Cantwell noted the Pentagon's recommendations will bring a net gain of 760 military and civilian jobs in the state, including 1,401 new jobs at the Bremerton Naval Station, 230 more at Fort Lewis and 139 more at Whidbey Island.

While no major bases in Washington state were recommended for closure, several National Guard and Reserve facilities were on the list for closure.

Besides the barracks, closures include the Navy-Marine Corps Reserve Center in Tacoma, the Army National Guard Reserve Center in Everett and the U.S. Army Reserve Center at Fort Lawton in Seattle. All together, these closures would represent a loss of 267 personnel 197 military and 70 civilian.

Vancouver's loss

In Vancouver, the Army Reserve and Washington National Guard occupy 24 buildings on 20 acres in the east barracks, east of Fort Vancouver Way.

The 104th Division headquarters oversees seven brigades in 14 Western states. The headquarters of the 104th runs a $50-million-a-year training program, preparing 12,000 troops for battle annually. It trains 1,000 soldiers in Vancouver each year, many as military police and drill instructors.

Besides the Army Reserve's 104th, Vancouver Barracks is home to the Washington National Guard's Service Battery, 2nd Brigade, 146th Field Artillery Battery, 81st Armor Brigade as well as to the Army's 396th Combat Support Hospital and 915th Forward Surgical Support Team.

The barracks also accommodates 10 other Army Reserve units under command of the 70th Regional Readiness Command in Seattle, which is scheduled to move to Fort McCoy, Wis.

Vancouver Barracks hosts a family resource center for identification cards, vehicle registration, family support, a post exchange, and a beauty and barber shop.

Pentagon targets 1,083 Oregon jobs
Plan would shuffle Portland air unit, close Umatilla
Statesman Journal (Salem, OR)
Ellyn Ferguson
May 14, 2005

WASHINGTON -- Oregon would lose more than 800 civilian jobs under Pentagon recommendations released Friday that call for closing the Umatilla Chemical Depot and restructuring the Air Force National Guard unit based at the Portland International Airport.

The Pentagon made the recommendation as a sweeping national effort to streamline and restructure the military to face new threats.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the latest round of base consolidations will save nearly $49 billion during 20 years and trim about 10 percent of the military services' excess capacity.

Earlier rounds occurred in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Most of the installations on the Pentagon's list will stay there unless the lawmakers, lobbyists and others advocating for them can convince the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission they should be removed.

U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden, D-Portland, and Gordon Smith, R-Pendleton, said they were concerned about the recommendations, which would eliminate 112 military personnel and 452 civilians from the Air National Guard unit in Portland and eventually 127 military personnel and 385 civilians at the Umatilla Chemical Depot.

"I am going to review these recommendations close," Smith said. "I want to ensure that Oregonians will be safe and that our communities receive all the help available to recover economically if this plan goes through."

Wyden said, "I'm going to have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place. I'm not going to allow our state to become a sacrifice zone in an era of increased homeland-security needs."

U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-West Linn, also vowed to fight the proposal.

"The (Defense) secretary's proposed realignment of the Portland Air Guard Center doesn't make sense," Hooley said. "The Portland Air Guard Center is a strategic hub, and diminishing its mission runs counter to adequately protecting the region's security. The benefit of its current function far outweighs any possible savings that might come from realignment."

Gov. Ted Kulongoski echoed that view.

"The 142nd is the premier F-15 fighter wing in our national air-defense system and the only unit responsible for carrying out the homeland-air-defense mission in the Pacific Northwest. The BRAC makes no recommendation for how that critical mission will be filled," he said.

"The recommendations today will also strip the Portland Air Base of all aircraft, including the 939th air refueling wing, which has made substantial infrastructure improvements to the base and served as the replacement unit following the transfer of aircraft from the 939th rescue wing in April 2003."

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, a member of the House Homeland Security Committee, said the proposed shifts in Portland raised questions about "how the military effectively can maintain homeland defense in Oregon and the Pacific coast."

DeFazio, D-Springfield, conceded that it would be difficult to convince the commission to disregard the recommendation.

Capt. Mike Braibish, a spokesman for the Oregon Air National Guard, said the recommendation to cut 564 full-time military and civilian positions at the Portland Air National Guard base includes Guard and Reserve positions.

Air bases in Portland and at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls and the Portland Air National Guard base represent more than 2,000 people that are employed in the Air National Guard.

"There are still many unknowns in this entire process," Braibish said. "First, these are recommendations. And second, there is no determination as to what personnel moves with a company. Even if these recommendations do go through, one thing that will remain constant is that the Oregon National Guard will remain here for the state," he said.

In Portland, the Defense Department would shift Air National Guard aircraft to installations elsewhere in the Northwest and in the Midwest.

Planes from the 939th Air Refueling Wing would go to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma and Forbes Field Air Guard Station in Kansas. Operations and maintenance staff members would go to Tinker. Remaining personnel would be sent to Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

F-15 planes from the 142nd Fighter Wing would go to Atlantic City, N.J., and New Orleans. The fighter wing's expeditionary combat support with the 244th and 272nd Combat Communications squadrons would remain at the Portland International Airport.

The 304th Rescue Squadron would be assigned to McChord Air Force Base in Washington, but no aircraft would be moved.

The Defense Department said its recommendation would move refueling aircraft and personnel to military installations with higher military value. Officials decided to move F-15 jets to New Orleans Naval Air Station even though the facility ranks slightly lower than Portland in its fighter rankings. The Defense Department said the recommendation to shift from Portland to New Orleans "best utilizes available facilities on the installation while reducing the cost to the government to lease facilities in the community."

The Pentagon called for closing Umatilla in 2011 when it finishes destroying chemical weapons. The estimated cost to close the depot is $15.5 million. The 20-year savings are estimated at $681.1 million.

The Army summed up its recommendation by saying, "There is no further use for Umatilla Chemical Depot."

Angela Wilhelms, a spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, said the recommendation was not a surprise.

The good news for Walden's district was that the news that the Kingston Field station suffered no losses.

PDX Air Base Closure Could Affect Homeland Security
Senators To Fight For Safety, Jobs
KOIN News (Portland, OR)
May 13, 2005

PORTLAND -- Oregon would lose more than 1,000 military personnel under a base closure and realignment plan announced Friday.

According to a list sent to members of Congress by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Umatilla Chemical Depot and Naval Reserve Center in Central Point would be closed. The Air National Guard base in Portland would be significantly reduced in size.

The Umatilla Depot, in Eastern Oregon near Hermiston, would lose 512 employees, while the Guard base at Portland International Airport would lose 564 employees.

According to Oregon members of Congress, an Air National Guard base in Klamath Falls would not be affected by the plan.

Under the realignment of the Portland base, the 939th Air Refueling Wing would be moved entirely to Oklahoma, California, and Kansas. And the majority of the 142nd Air Wing would be moved to bases in New Jersey and Louisiana.

Officials at the Portland air base said the move could affect homeland security.

The base is currently home to 18 F-15 fighter jets and eight refueling planes. About 20 percent of the base's personnel and all of the planes could be lost.

The F-15s provide security for Portland and the West Coast from Canada to Northern California.

"We have jets that are going to be moved out of here. What exactly the implication is of that, who's going to take over homeland defense, air defense mission? We don't know. And how's that going to work? We don't know. That's what we're trying to figure out," Air National Guard Capt. Misty Mazzia told KOIN News 6.

The Pentagon's plan drew immediate fire from Oregon's two senators.

In a joint statement, democrat Ron Wyden and republican Gordon Smith said they will fight to keep Oregonians safe -- and save Oregon jobs.

Wyden says he is going to have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if the changes are put in place. He says he's not going to allow Oregon to become a sacrifice zone in an era of increased homeland security needs.

Smith says before any changes are made, the Pentagon is going to have to justify its decisions. He says he wants to ensure that Oregonians receive all the help available to recover economically if the plan goes through.

Opinions/ Editorials

The Loss of a Reassuring Roar
The Oregonian (Portland, OR)
May 17, 2005

Summary: A base-closing plan that would transfer Portland-based F-15 fighter jets would take away the state's air defenses

When 9/11 brought terrorism home, the thunder of F-15 fighter jets flying over Portland changed from a curiosity to a comfort. Now it feels like Oregon's security blanket is being snatched away.

Under the military base-closure and realignment plan announced Friday, Oregon would lose more than 1,000 military-related jobs and all F-15 fighter jets based in Portland. The job loss is painful, but the prospect of the state's air defense flying away, once and for all, is truly disturbing.

Communities and elected officials across the nation are vowing to fight the recommendations of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission to close 180 military installations, including 33 major bases. The proposals will now go to a federal commission for review.

In Oregon, the BRAC Commission recommends closing the Umatilla Chemical Weapons Depot, a small Navy Reserve Center in Central Point and moving the 18 fighter jets now in Portland to bases in Atlantic City and New Orleans. Eight other KC-135 jets in the 939th Air Refueling Wing in Portland also would be sent elsewhere. The proposed closure at Umatilla actually is good news -- it means the military has no plans to move additional chemical weapons to Eastern Oregon once those buried there are incinerated.

Most of the outrage around the country is about the loss of thousands of jobs and the effects on communities that have built up around major military bases and depend upon them for their economic survival. The argument for keeping the F-15s in Oregon is different -- more than 500 jobs at the Air National Guard base are at stake, but the pressing questions now are about the state's security, not its economy.

The critical issue is how the military intends to protect the communities of Oregon and Southwest Washington in the event of a terrorism attack from the air.

"I have a hard time understanding how the military can effectively maintain homeland defense in Oregon and the Pacific Coast, when they are moving all the operational capabilities away from the Portland Air Guard Station," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.

So do we. Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski and every member of the Oregon delegation must press this issue with the Pentagon and the presidentially appointed commission that can add to or subtract bases before sending a final list to President Bush.

Oregon still has a chance to keep the F-15s patrolling over this state: During past rounds of base closures, the commission dropped as many as a quarter of the recommended bases from the list. Kulongoski said he plans to invite the commission members to come to Portland to see the airbase and discuss the region's security needs.

The commission must understand that the argument for keeping the F-15s at the Portland Air National Guard base is not about preserving jobs or saving money in the military budget. It is about having a necessary air defense in a major West Coast city.

Slimming the military: States gear up for fight over base closures
The Register-Guard (Eugene, OR)
May 10, 2005

Members of Oregon's congressional delegation, including Sens. Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith, recently fired off a letter to the independent commission that's about to receive a list of proposed military base closures from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Even though the base-closure list is secret, the lawmakers were issuing a precautionary plea for the survival of Air National Guard bases in Portland and Klamath Falls, as well as the Umatilla Chemical Depot. The Oregon bases, they wrote, "play a crucial role in securing the nation's borders and protecting the United States from terrorist and non-conventional threats."

Oregon lawmakers may well be correct in arguing that their state's military installations should be spared. But across the nation, lawmakers are making nearly identical pleas for bases in their home states or districts. State and local governments are spending millions of dollars in what promises to be a fierce and protracted bureaucratic battle over the closures.

For example, Utah's Legislature recently allocated $5 million to save its bases. New York's Legislature has earmarked millions of dollars to save the state's bases, and Gov. George Pataki recently traveled to Washington to lobby commission members.

Despite such intense pressure, the military must close many of its bases in order to cut costs and become more efficient. Last year, Rumsfeld estimated that a fourth of the military's 425 major bases were no longer needed. Since then, he has said some may be saved to house troops being redeployed from U.S. bases in Europe and Asia.

But the list of closures still promises to be long and for many states and communities, painful. The statistics tell the story: Since the Cold War, the number of U.S. military personnel has declined by 40 percent, while less than 20 percent of bases have been shuttered.

A recent Government Accountability Office study of the last round of base closings offers solace to states bracing for closures. It found that most communities eventually regained most civilian jobs lost as a result of base closures. It also found that many closed bases had been successfully redeveloped for other uses. Most importantly, the report found that the closings had saved U.S. taxpayers nearly $40 billion since 1988.

One explanation for the early maneuvering is that lawmakers will find it hard to make changes to the closure list. That's because of laws that help buffer the process from political intervention. For example, it will require the approval of at least seven of the nine members of the influential Base Realignment and Closure Commission before any base can be removed from the list.

After Rumsfeld releases his list late this week, commissioners will conduct their own review and submit a revised list to the president by Sept. 8. The commission is the only group that can make adjustments - the president must either accept or reject the commission's recommendations in full. Once the president submits a final list to Congress, lawmakers have 45 days to either accept or reject the list as a whole. If lawmakers do not reject the list, it automatically becomes final.

It's naive to believe the process of closing bases can remain above politics, but lawmakers should strive to focus on the larger picture, and to remember that closures are necessary to reflect changing military and budgetary realities.

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points for Visit to Umatilla Army Depot

1. **Military value is the most important consideration to the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) as the Commission evaluates the suggestion made by the Department of Defense (DoD) to close the Umatilla Army Depot**
   - The Commission will evaluate the economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure of the installation could have on the surrounding community but the key factor in the Commission's decision as to whether or not to suggest Umatilla for closure is military value.
   - Although the Commission is keenly aware of the human impact of the suggestion by DoD to close Umatilla, the Commission will base its decisions, as to whether or not to suggest the installation for closure, almost entirely upon the current military value of the base.
   - The Commission recognizes the role that Umatilla has played in the nation's effort to destroy its chemical weapons arsenal as required through international treaty. Umatilla has been considered essential in the destruction of the M55 rocket—the most hazardous in the Army's arsenal.

2. **The Commission is aware of the possible economic, environmental, and other effects that the suggestions to close Umatilla Army Depot could have and is taking these into consideration.**
   - The Congress established the Commission as an independent entity to ensure that all critical factors have been evaluated, and that the effects on the surrounding community have been taken into full account in the decision to recommend a base for closure or realignment.
   - The Commission will evaluate the economic impact that the installation closure would have on the community surrounding Umatilla, while basing its decision almost entirely upon military value.
   - The local community and the installation have developed a strong economic relationship over the years. The loss of roughly 800 jobs can have a significant impact on a community. The Commission understands this and will take it into account as it delineates its final recommendation.

3. **The Congress established the Commission as a non-political, transparent, and independent entity to perform a thorough evaluation, by a process set forth by law, of the bases suggested for closure or realignment by DoD.**
   - The Commission serves to ensure that all pertinent factors have been evaluated and to serve as accountability to the public for the suggestion, made by DoD, to realign NAS Pensacola.
   - The Commission encourages community input. The public may submit comments directly through the Commission's official website: www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Q's & A's for Visit to Umatilla Chemical Depot

Q1. The combined cuts, proposed by the Department of Defense (DoD) for military presence in the state of Oregon are substantial. Estimates suggest that roughly 1,083 jobs will be lost in Oregon. Of these jobs, approximately 884 would come from the recommended closure of Umatilla Chemical Depot. This represents 2 percent of the Pendleton-Hermiston area workforce. Will the Commission take into account the economic ramifications of this proposal?
A1. The statute establishes the criteria. As outlined by the statute, the Department of Defense placed priority on military value; while also taking into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of a base would have on the community surrounding that base. Information that was gathered in the analysis of a base, with the exception of information that is sensitive to national security, will be made accessible to the public. Part of what constitutes DoD's determination of military value is jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in today's changing global threats.

Q2. Currently, two means exist in the destruction of the nation's chemical weapons arsenal—incineration and chemical neutralization. Recently, Umatilla has experienced a number of fires in the incineration process. Will the Commission take into account the current safety of the depot, as well as the safety of the closure process?
A2. The Commission will perform a thorough, accurate, and objective analysis which will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider other factors.

Q3. Did Umatilla's recent series of incidents factor into the DoD's recommendation for closure?
A3. The statute establishes the criteria for the evaluation and analysis of whether an installation should be closed. As outlined by the statute, the Department of Defense placed priority on military value; while also taking into consideration economic, environmental, and other effects that the closure or realignment of a base would have on the community surrounding that base.

Q4. Under the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, the United States agreed to destroy its remaining chemical weapons stockpile. The Chemical Materials Agency estimates that it has destroyed roughly 43 percent of its chemical munitions and 36 percent of its chemical agents. This process must be completed by 2012. Does the Commission anticipate that if the suggestion to close the installation is enacted, that the closure will coincide with this date?
A4. The Commission does not anticipate that the current closure schedule would conflict with schedules established through international treaty. The sole task of the commission, as set forth by statute, is to perform a thorough, objective, and transparent analysis to

A4. Continued
ensure that the suggestions to close or realign military installations have been made in accordance with the law.

Q5. Will the Commission take into account the environmental costs of cleaning up the Depot after the destruction of the chemical weapons arsenal?
A5. The Commission will perform a thorough, accurate, and objective analysis which will take into account, chiefly, the military value of the base, but will also consider the economic, environmental, and other factors. The Commission recognizes that the closure of a military installation may have significant environmental impact. As such, the Commission will make every effort to understand the environmental concerns surrounding an installation's closure and will factor those concerns into its final recommendation.

Q6. Of the 220,000 chemical weapons stored at Umatilla, the facility has successfully destroyed 15,000. Does the Commission anticipate that the Depot will be able to complete its mission under the current closure calendar?
A6. The Commission will evaluate all pertinent factors, as prescribed by law, before reaching its conclusion.

Q7. How can the Community make the Commission aware of information that the Community feels may have been overlooked by DoD?
A7. The BRAC Commission encourages community input into this transparent and objective process. The public may submit comments through the Commission's official website, which is www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

UMATILLA ARMY DEPOT
OREGON

National News Articles
Toxic Releases Drop, But Worst Toxins Persist
3 Chemical Weapons Bases Slated to Close
BRAC To Close 15 Major Installations, Improve Army Efficiency
Incineration Resumes At Pine Bluff Arsenal
USA - WEAPON DISPOSAL HALTED MAY 20/OREG; Department of Environmental Quality; Brief Article

Local News Articles
Base-Closing Plans Aired
Deq Tells Army To Halt Burning Of Umatilla Rockets
Oregon Orders Halt To Work At Umatilla
Umatilla Army Depot on List of Base Closures

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

Toxic Releases Drop, But Worst Toxins Persist
The Christian Science Monitor
Brad Knickerbocker
May 18, 2005

May 18, 2005 — The good news about toxic pollutants in the air, soil and water is that overall levels are coming down. But according to the Environmental Protection Agency some of the most toxic substances — mercury, dioxin, lead and PCBs — remain an increasing problem.

The recent announcement of another round of military base closures could put more focus on the problem of toxic waste and how to solve it.

The EPA notes significant pollution problems at some 100 military bases, and 34 already-shuttered bases are among the most toxic "Superfund" sites, according to a survey by The Associated Press. Problems persist with such hard-to-remove contaminants as cleaning solvents, asbestos, radioactive materials, unexploded ordnance and lead paint. The Pentagon already has spent $8.3 billion cleaning up recently closed military sites, and the total bill could top $12 billion.

All of this makes it difficult for the Pentagon to convert such facilities to state or privately owned properties, the Government Accountability Office reported recently. In most cases, it takes years,

if not decades, to finish the cleanup. In some places, for example, poisonous chemicals have seeped into groundwater flowing off-base.

According to the GAO, which looked at the previous four rounds of base closures going back to 1988, 28 percent of the total acreage has yet to be transferred "due primarily to the need for environmental cleanup."

Some Progress, But PBTs Building

While new base closures announced last week will add to that problem, total amounts of toxic pollution in the U.S. environment have edged down.

In its latest annual Toxics Release Inventory, which covers more than 23,000 facilities and about 650 chemicals, the EPA reports that 4.4 billion pounds of toxic chemicals were released in 2003 (the latest available figures), about 6 percent less than the previous year. Most of the decrease was in metal mining and chemical manufacturing. Since 1998, before which fewer chemicals and fewer facilities were reported, toxic releases have gone down 42 percent.

At the same time, EPA officials and environmentalists note the worrisome release of persistent bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals, which increased by 50 million pounds or 11 percent in the latest reporting year. These include dioxins, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls.

"PBT chemicals are of particular concern," reports the EPA, "not only because they are toxic, but also because they remain in the environment for long periods of time and are not readily destroyed [they persist] and build up or accumulate in body tissues [they bioaccumulate]."

In 2003, for example, mercury and mercury-compound releases jumped 41 percent. Mercury is a highly toxic substance that can poison wildlife and cause brain and nervous system damage in children and fetuses. Unlike most other pollutants, mercury tends to concentrate in dangerous "hot spots."

"Although it is good news that overall releases are back on track, it is a major concern that some of the most hazardous chemicals have increased so dramatically," says Meghan Purvis, an environmental health specialist with U.S. Public Interest Research Group in Washington.

Assessing the Future

Meanwhile, according to the watchdog group Environmental Integrity Project, the 50 dirtiest among the nation's 359 largest power plants generate as little as 14 percent of the electric power but account for a disproportionately large share of pollution emissions: up to 50 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions, 42 percent of mercury, 40 percent of nitrogen oxides and 35 percent of carbon dioxide.

"A huge share of these emissions comes from a handful of unnecessarily dirty power plants that have not yet installed modern pollution controls, or which operate inefficiently," says Eric Schaeffer, director of the Environmental Integrity Project and the EPA's former chief of regulatory enforcement.

Others take a longer view of pollution in the United States.

"In reality, the data is very clear," says Scott Segal, director of the Electric Reliability Coordinating Council in Washington, which lobbies on behalf of power plants and utilities around the country. "Power plant emissions, along with other indicators of air quality in the United States, continue to improve as part of a trend dating back several decades."

"With a decade of compiled research … we've found that it is nearly impossible to paint a grim, doom-and-gloom picture anymore," says Steven Hayward of the Pacific Research Institute, a free-market think tank in San Francisco that co-publishes the "Index of Leading Environmental Indicators" with the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. "The facts speak for themselves, and the facts are hugely encouraging."

Other more recent facts may be less encouraging, however. For example, the Sierra Club reported last month that leaky underground storage tanks "are a growing threat to public health."

In all, there are some 130,000 leaking tanks around the country, including 17,544 needing cleanup in Florida, 15,049 in California, 9,039 in Michigan and 1,221 in Tennessee.

"More than 100 million people drink groundwater in states where thousands of underground storage tanks are leaking and need cleanups," says Grant Cope, a toxics specialist with the Sierra Club. "These sites include toxics like benzene, toluene, and heavy metals that can quickly pollute groundwater, threaten public health, burden taxpayers with cleanup costs, and hurt real estate values … A pin prick-sized hole in one fuel tank can leak 400 gallons of contamination a day, and one gallon of gasoline can pollute 1 million gallons of groundwater."

3 Chemical Weapons Bases Slated to Close
The Associated Press
Matt Kelley
May 13, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Defense Department on Friday recommended closing three of the eight bases where Cold War-era chemical weapons are being stored and destroyed.

The depots in Utah, Oregon and Indiana are part of the Army's program to destroy the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by 2012, as required under an international treaty. All three have started destroying their deadly stockpiles _ using incinerators at two plants and chemical neutralization at the third.

Environmentalists and some area residents have criticized the chemical weapons destruction plants, saying they are unsafe. Some small leaks of chemical agents have occurred, particularly at the base in Utah, but no one outside the bases was hurt.

Destruction of the chemical weapons will continue, said Marilyn Daughdrill, a spokeswoman for the Army Chemical Materials Agency. All of the chemical weapons depots have detailed plans for decontamination and environmental cleanup before they are finally closed, she said.

"We will not sacrifice safety," Daughdrill said.

The three depots suggested for closure are:

_ The Deseret Chemical Depot in Utah.

_ The Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon.

_ The Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana.

President Nixon ordered a halt to U.S. chemical weapons production in 1969, and the U.S. signed the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, pledging to destroy its remaining stockpiles. The Chemical Materials Agency says it has destroyed about 43 percent of its chemical munitions and 36 percent of the chemical weapons agents in bulk storage.

The Army built incineration plants for chemical weapons at the Umatilla and Deseret depots, as well as other bases in Alabama and Arkansas. Newport and another facility in Maryland use the chemical neutralization process. Sites in Colorado and Kentucky are planned for trying other disposal technologies.

One of the most serious accidents came in 2002, when a worker at the Deseret incinerator was exposed to the nerve agent sarin during a botched maintenance job. The worker survived.

Deseret's incinerator has been operating since 1996 and so far has destroyed all the sarin stored at the depot, Daughdrill said. Deseret held 44 percent of the nation's chemical weapons stockpile before the destruction began.

Deseret, the site farthest along in its destruction of chemical weapons, is scheduled to finish destroying all of its chemical weapons in 2009, Daughdrill said.

BRAC To Close 15 Major Installations, Improve Army Efficiency
Army News Service
Eric W. Cramer
May 24, 2005

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, May 13, 2005) – The Army will close 15 major installations over the next six years and close or realign hundreds of small installations, including Army Reserve and National Guard facilities, if DoD Base Realignment and Closure recommendations released today receive final approval.

Major Army installations slated for closure are: Fort Monroe, Va.; Fort McPherson, Ga.; Fort Gillem, Ga.; Fort Monmouth, N.J.; Newport Chemical Depot, Ind.; Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, Kan.; Selfridge Army Activity, Mich.; Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant; Hawthorne Army Depot, Nev.; Umatilla Chemical Depot, Ore.; Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant, Texas; Red River Army Depot, Texas; Deseret Chemical Depot, Utah; Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant, Calif.; and Charles E. Kelly Support Center, Pa.

In addition to closing these installations, the current plan would close 176 Army Reserve and 211 Army National Guard facilities. These will be replaced by 125 multi-component Armed Forces Reserve Centers.

The changes are part of a total BRAC package expected to save the Department of Defense about

$50 billion over the next two decades, officials said.

Gen. Richard Cody, vice chief of staff for the Army, said the changes to the reserve-component structure are designed to bring the Army Reserve and National Guard in line with the Army's new modular, unit-of-action structure.

Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the Army National Guard Bureau, said the changes in the Guard and Reserve centers will not only lead to better efficiency within the units, but will also lead to improved recruitment.

"We hope it will affect recruitment and retention in a positive way," Blum said. "By divesting ourselves of some of the more remote facilities and moving to areas with better demographics, it should allow for positive change."

The BRAC proposal also calls for a change in location for a number of large commands and Army functions. Among these is the relocation of the Armor Center, currently at Fort Knox, Ky., to Fort Benning, Ga., to become part of a new Maneuver Center there.

"What Knox gets in return," Cody said, "is we'll activate a modular brigade combat team there. Accessions Command will go there and the Cadet Command. Human Resources will move out of [leased] space and go to Fort Knox. We're also moving an air defense artillery brigade from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Fort Sill (Okla.) to create a Fires Center."

Training and Doctrine Command will move from Fort Monroe, Va., to Fort Eustis, Va., as Fort Monroe closes under the current BRAC proposal, Cody said.

Among many other changes, the BRAC proposal:

-- Relocates Army Materiel Command headquarters to Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

-- Relocates the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, N.C., to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

-- Relocates Forces Command Headquarters and U.S. Army Reserve Command to Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

-- Stations Third Army headquarters with the Air Force component of U.S. Forces Central Command at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

-- Moves the Installation Management Agency headquarters to Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

-- Activates modular BCTs at Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Knox, Ky.; and Fort Riley, Kan.

-- Creates a new medical hospital and research facility, the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and builds a new 165-bed hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Whether these changes are approved depends on actions by the BRAC commission, said Michael Wynne, assistant undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics.

The commission, made up of former legislators and military experts, will forward its recommendations to the president after reviewing the Department of Defense recommendations.

It must take action by Sept. 8. The president will then have until Sept. 23 to accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety. If accepted, Congress then has 45 days to reject the recommendations before they become binding.

Specific changes must begin within two years of the recommendation's acceptance, and must be complete within six years, without interrupting ongoing operations, Wynn said.

Incineration Resumes At Pine Bluff Arsenal
The Associated Press
May 20, 2005

The Pine Bluff Arsenal resumed incineration of chemical weapons Friday morning, two days after operations were suspended because of a small fire at a similar facility in Oregon.

The arsenal began processing rockets once again after Washington Group International - the contractor conducting the incineration work - determined that it was safe to do so. Bob Love, acting project manager for Washington Group International, decided to suspend operations Wednesday after learning of a fire on the rocket-destruction processing line in **Umatilla,** Ore., according to a news release from the arsenal.

Washington Group International is handling the work at both sites and is looking into the **Umatilla** fire and what may have caused it. The contractor is sending experts from Pine Bluff to participate in the investigation.

Umatilla and the Pine Bluff Arsenal each hold about 12 percent of the nation's chemical weapons and are both in the process of destroying rockets laced with sarin nerve agent.

The Arkansas operations paused May 11 and 12 after a small fire ignited at the Pine Bluff Arsenal. Incineration of the rockets and the liquid they contained resumed last Friday, but the **Umatilla** incident prompted another suspension in Arkansas.

USA - WEAPON DISPOSAL HALTED MAY 20/OREG; Department of Environmental Quality; Brief Article
Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules
May 20, 2005

OREGONIAN -- Officials in Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality have ordered the Army to halt destruction of rockets armed with the sarin nerve agent after fires broke out in the facility, reports the Oregonian.

The fuel in a rocket exploded at the **Umatilla** Chemical Depot, the third such accident in six weeks, starting a fire in a containment building.

All the incidents occurred in explosive-containment rooms, but state officials want to examine why so many shells have exploded.

Workers have already destroyed 15,000 sarin rockets at the facility.

Local News Articles

Base-Closing Plans Aired
The Bulletin
Monica Mercer
May 14, 2005

WASHINGTON — The proposed closing of the Umatilla Chemical Depot and other Oregon military sites might mean the loss of hundreds of jobs and the movement of fighters and air tankers from Portland to other states.

The Defense Department announced Friday that the depot in the Pendleton-Hermiston area and the Navy Reserve Center in Central Point have been recommended for closure for the first time under the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990.

In addition, the department's recommendations include the shift in mission, or realignment, of the Portland International Airport Air Guard Station.

Military and civilian personnel could be hit with a total projected loss of 1,083 jobs statewide.

However, that projection could change as implementation of the department's recommendations takes place over the next five years. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will review the recommendations to close the two Oregon installations during the summer.

The state's congressional delegation sent letters to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the commissioner of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission last week detailing the importance of Oregon's military installations. As late as Thursday, Rep. Greg Walden's office said there was no reason to think that Oregon would be affected by the recommended closings.

But now Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., says he'll "have lots of questions to understand how the Pentagon plans to keep Oregonians safe if these changes are put in place."

The commission has until September to submit its final list of recommendations for nationwide base closures and realignments to President Bush, who will submit it to Congress for final consideration by the end of the year.

Oregon escaped the previous four rounds of closures. Umatilla went through realignment in 1988 when it ended its storage of traditional warfare such as bombs and bullets.

The Defense Department has confirmed that there is no further use for the Umatilla Chemical Depot and that it will not receive any additional workload at its destruction facility. It will cost $15.5 million to shut down the depot, but the savings during the implementation period will be $89.1 million, according to the Defense Department.

As many as 884 Umatilla jobs could be permanently lost, which amounts to about 2 percent of Pendleton-Hermiston area employment. Binder estimated that the entire process for carrying out

the depot's mission, including environmental cleanup and fulfilling state permit requirements, will be completed by 2015.

Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., said the Pentagon will have to justify the new decision regarding Oregon.

Umatilla Army Public Affairs Officer Mary Binder called the Defense Department's recommendation "not surprising" since the community has long known Umatilla's only mission now is to destroy a finite amount of chemical warfare. The process must be completed by 2012.

The movement of certain aircraft from Portland's air guard station to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma and Forbes Field in Kansas is because those installations have "higher military value," according to the Defense Department. All 15 F-15 fighter jets operated by the 142nd Fighter Wing would be transferred to New Jersey and Louisiana, and eight KC-135R tankers flown by the 939th Air Refueling Wing would go to Oklahoma and Kansas.

The 1,018 jobs that could permanently be lost in the Portland area represent only 0.1 percent of area employment. Further, the Defense Department said it would save $100.2 million over 20 years if the Portland realignment takes place.

Closures and realignments nationwide are a result of the Base Closure and Realignment Act as amended in 1990. The law came on the heels of a 20-year plan for modernizing military infrastructure and the Defense Department's inventory of all its facilities.

Defense has always maintained that its criteria for making recommendations give "paramount importance to an installation's military value."

The Loss Of A Reassuring Roar
The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon)
May 17, 2005

Summary: A base-closing plan that would transfer Portland-based F-15 fighter jets would take away the state's air defenses

When 9/11 brought terrorism home, the thunder of F-15 fighter jets flying over Portland changed from a curiosity to a comfort. Now it feels like Oregon's security blanket is being snatched away.

Under the military base-closure and realignment plan announced Friday, Oregon would lose more than 1,000 military-related jobs and all F-15 fighter jets based in Portland. The job loss is painful, but the prospect of the state's air defense flying away, once and for all, is truly disturbing.

Communities and elected officials across the nation are vowing to fight the recommendations of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission to close 180 military installations, including 33 major bases. The proposals will now go to a federal commission for review.

In Oregon, the BRAC Commission recommends closing the **Umatilla** Chemical Weapons Depot, a small Navy Reserve Center in Central Point and moving the 18 fighter jets now in Portland to bases in Atlantic City and New Orleans. Eight other KC-135 jets in the 939th Air Refueling Wing in Portland also would be sent elsewhere. The proposed closure at **Umatilla** actually is good news

-- it means the military has no plans to move additional chemical weapons to Eastern Oregon once those buried there are incinerated.

Most of the outrage around the country is about the loss of thousands of jobs and the effects on communities that have built up around major military bases and depend upon them for their economic survival. The argument for keeping the F-15s in Oregon is different -- more than 500 jobs at the Air National Guard base are at stake, but the pressing questions now are about the state's security, not its economy.

The critical issue is how the military intends to protect the communities of Oregon and Southwest Washington in the event of a terrorism attack from the air.

"I have a hard time understanding how the military can effectively maintain homeland defense in Oregon and the Pacific Coast, when they are moving all the operational capabilities away from the Portland Air Guard Station," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.

So do we. Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski and every member of the Oregon delegation must press this issue with the Pentagon and the presidentially appointed commission that can add to or subtract bases before sending a final list to President Bush.

Oregon still has a chance to keep the F-15s patrolling over this state: During past rounds of base closures, the commission dropped as many as a quarter of the recommended bases from the list. Kulongoski said he plans to invite the commission members to come to Portland to see the airbase and discuss the region's security needs.

The commission must understand that the argument for keeping the F-15s at the Portland Air National Guard base is not about preserving jobs or saving money in the military budget. It is about having a necessary air defense in a major West Coast city.

Deq Tells Army To Halt Burning Of Umatilla Rockets

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon)
Andy Dworkin
May 19, 2005

Summary: A fire in a containment building, the third since April, forces a pause in destruction of weapons with sarin, a deadly nerve agent

Oregon officials ordered the U.S. Army to quit destroying rockets armed with nerve agent at the **Umatilla** Chemical Depot after a rocket exploded during processing Wednesday, the third such blast in six weeks.

No one has been hurt in any of the incidents, which happened inside explosive-containment rooms designed to withstand blasts and hold in nerve agent. No workers are in those rooms while machines automatically drain sarin, a nerve agent, from the rockets, chop them up and send the pieces to an incinerator.

The blast Wednesday occurred as a rocket, drained of most of its sarin, was chopped into pieces by an automated metal blade. The blade was cutting through a portion of the rocket containing propellant when ignition occurred, said Mary Binder, an Army spokeswoman.

Improved firefighting systems stopped the morning fire within about three seconds, Binder said.

That's much faster than the 10 minutes it took to extinguish an April 25 fire. That fire, and one on April 7, both seem to have caused more damage to processing equipment than Wednesday's fire, Binder said, though workers still were assessing Wednesday's blaze.

Although weapons incinerators in other states have had similar fires, no facility has had as many as **Umatilla.** The depot near Hermiston had its first blaze in November, two months after starting up.

"We are concerned," said Sue Oliver, an official with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. "With three of these events in a short amount of time, we want to make sure that Washington Demilitarization Company and the Army have done everything possible to detect the cause."

Washington Demilitarization runs the incinerator for the Army, which stores chemical weapons at eight U.S. sites, including **Umatilla.** Those weapons are being destroyed under international treaty. **Umatilla** is starting with the sarin-tipped M55 rockets, the most hazardous in the Army's arsenal. **Umatilla** initially stored more than 220,000 arms. Workers had destroyed about 15,000 sarin rockets when Wednesday's fire began, Binder said.

But the **Umatilla** plant is barred from processing more rockets until it finishes "thorough investigations" into the fires' causes, according to the Wednesday DEQ letter that halted rocket processing. The facility also must show it has taken steps to prevent and limit damage from such fires, the letter said. Neither Binder nor Oliver could estimate how long that will take.

Processing had stopped for more than a week after each April fire. This pause, however, probably will be longer. The DEQ did not require investigations to be completed after those fires, and workers are studying the causes.

"At this point, we haven't ruled out anything," Binder said. "But from what we've seen . . . the people, procedures and design worked as planned" within the incinerator plant.

Investigators are focusing on the rockets, especially their explosive propellant. All three explosions happened as a metal blade made the fifth of seven cuts through rockets that have had most of their sarin drained out, Binder said. At that point, the blade is cutting the propellant.

Binder said the rockets in April's blasts shared propellant from the same production lot. She said crews had not yet determined the propellant lot for Wednesday's fire. A recent fire at an Arkansas plant involved propellant that was from a different lot but was made around the same time, she said.

Workers are preparing to sample propellant from other arms at **Umatilla** as they look for possible causes to the fires, Binder said.

If the propellant is the problem, Oliver said, it's possible that some fires are inevitable. But the DEQ wants the Army to determine the cause and reduce risks.

Oregon Orders Halt To Work At Umatilla
Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News - The Seattle Times – Washington
Hal Bernton
May 19, 2005

Oregon state officials yesterday ordered a halt to the processing of nerve-gas-filled rockets at the Army's **Umatilla** Chemical Depot because of a troubling series of fires that broke out in the facility during the past month.

The three fires, the latest of which briefly flared yesterday for about three seconds, occurred in a sealed-off processing room.

None injured any workers or leaked nerve gas into the broader plant or outside, according to the state and a spokeswoman for the depot in Eastern Oregon.

The fires fed on rocket fuel rather than the sarin-nerve agent that, for the most part, already had been drained out.

But the frequency of the fires and the intensity of the burns prompted state environmental regulators to order a shutdown that could last for days, weeks or possibly months as Army officials and contractors try to figure out what is happening.

"A fire is a contingency that is of great concern when you are processing chemical weapons," said Dennis Murphy, an Oregon Department of Environmental Quality official who monitors the **Umatilla** Chemical Depot.

"And though so far the [processing] room has done an excellent job, it wasn't designed to do that over and over," he said.

The first two fires, which occurred April 7 and April 23, both lasted for more than a minute and burned with great intensity before an automated water system helped snuff them out, Murphy said.

Depot officials say they are working hard to try to determine the cause of the fires.

"We strive for 100 percent [safety]," said Mary Binder, a depot spokeswoman. "And, when we don't reach that, we need to stop and take a look at what we're doing. ... We want to do it right." The **Umatilla** fires are happening with a greater frequency than those at other facilities processing nerve-gas rockets. In Utah, for example, only one fire has been reported since operations began in 1996, Murphy said.

The **Umatilla** chemical incinerator complex near Hermiston is a $ 2.5 billion project designed to destroy more than 200,000 rockets, bombs, mines and other items that hold nerve agents and mustard gas.

Rockets are drained of nerve agents, then burned along with the chemicals in four separate furnaces.

Since the complex opened last summer, the Army has voluntarily shut it down on several occasions to troubleshoot problems, including the two April fires.

This is the first time since startup the state has stepped in to order a shutdown.

Murphy said no one is sure what's triggering the fires. One theory is that the depot is now processing a batch of rockets that have deteriorated and become more unstable.

Since April, the depot has improved its remote-controlled watering system in the containment room, and that system was credited with quickly snuffing out yesterday's fire.

Umatilla Army Depot on List of Base Closures
KVEW TV
May 13th, 2005

The Pentagon has proposed closing the Umatilla Army Depot as part of a nationwide plan to reduce military expenses. The Depot would lose 512 employees, including more than 300 civilian positions. A Depot spokesperson says this news is not unexpected, considering the Army has begun destroying the stockpile of chemical weapons at the Depot.

In all, Oregon will lose more than a thousand soldiers under the base closure and realignment plan announced Friday. Washington will gain about 800 soldiers.

Opinions/ Editorials

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points Regarding Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho

1. **The Congress established the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to perform an independent evaluation of the suggestions made by the Department of Defense to close and realign various bases across the country. The Commission will follow a process set out by law, and while considering all critical contributing factors, will base its final decision regarding Mountain Home AFB almost entirely upon military value.**
    - The Commission is considering and --through an open and transparent process, set out by law—and placing priority on the current military value of a base, due to changes in global threats and the importance of having a military which is ready to meet those threats.
    - While the strategy to meet these threats is under the purview of DoD, the task of the Commission is to ensure that military value has been properly evaluated in the decision to close or realign an installation.
    - Some of the factors upon which DoD bases its judgements of military value are jointness, ease of mobility, and efficiency. DoD intends to streamline our military to ensure that it is able to meet current threats. The Commission will perform the evaluation to ensure that DoD's suggestions to close or realign various bases have been made in accordance with the law.

2. **The Commission is aware of the key defense roles that Mountain Home AFB has played and the pioneering missions it has been given and will carefully evaluate all key factors before coming to its conclusion, which will be based almost entirely upon military value.**
    - The Commission is aware of the valuable pioneering work that Mountian Home AFB has done and that the base led the way for "Air Expeditiary Commands."
    - Although there is some concern that multiple mission-changes and a lack of continuity could affect the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the troops at the base during a time of war, the Commission is aware of the various planes and missions that the base has had from the 1970s to today, and will take all pertinent factors into careful consideration.
    - The Commission understands the valuable role that Mountain Home AFB has played in the past, but in this environment of changing global threats, needs to determine the current military value of the installation so that precious resources are not wasted on excess infrastructure that provides little contribution to meeting today's changing global threats.

3. **The Commission understands the human impact that the suggestion to realign Mountain Home AFB could have, and will take the economic effects into careful account.**
    - While military value is the preeminent consideration, the Commission will also evaluate, as prescribed by law, the economic, environmental, and other effects that the realignment would have on the community, and welcomes community input in this process.
    - The Commission understands the effect that DoD's suggestion to realign the base could have on a town of 11 thousand people and will perform a careful economic analysis before coming to its conclusions, which will be based almost entirely upon military value.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Qs and As Regarding Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho

Q1. Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB) has had a long history. Over the past 14 years it has had different types of aircraft and has had multi-task missions. Will the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) take its past role in our national defense into account as the Commission makes its evaluations?
A1. The Congress established the BRAC Commission as an independent entity to perform a thorough, accurate, and transparent evaluation of the Department of Defense's (DoD) suggestions to close or realign bases across the country. The process, followed by the Commission, has been specifically prescribed by law and though the Commission will take economic, environmental, and other potential effects that the DoD suggestions could have if enacted, the most important consideration to the Commission will be the present military value of the base. The Commission understands the vitally important role that most, if not all, bases across the country have played in our nation's defense, but as the DoD seeks to streamline our military to ensure its ability to meet changing global threats, the Commission will ensure that the decisions to close or realign installations have been made only after a comprehensive evaluation and in accordance with the law.

Q2. In the late 1980s, Mountain Home had a developing new mission, with the idea of the "air expeditionary wing," which was to be a task force that could be sent to quell any uprising and whose units were fully self-contained, made up of fighters, bombers, and refueling tankers and the model was adopted for other bases across the country. Have the tactics of how US forces approach conflicts changed such that these units are now outdated?
A2. While DoD works with the strategy as to how best defend the United States against changing global threats, the job of the Commission is to ensure, through an open and transparent process, that the suggestions to close or realign a base have been made in accordance with the law and that all pertinent factors have been taken into account.

Q3. If DoD has suggested that Mountain Home AFB house only one kind of aircraft, having a homogenous line to save money, would that be sacrificing the cohesiveness of the unit during a time of war?
A3. While the Commission will take the economic, environmental, and other effects that the realignment of Mountain Home AFB would have on the surrounding community, the final decision of the Commission will be made based almost entirely upon the military value of the installation, as prescribed by law. Ensuring our nation's defense, by making our military more streamlined and efficient is the number one priority of the Commission. While DoD creates the strategies to best meet changing global threats, the Commission was created by the Congress to ensure that suggestions to close or realign a base have been made in accordance with the law and that all key factors have been fully evaluated.

Q4. Mountain Home AFB has had a long history and several changes in mission. From 1972 to 1991, it hosted first F111s and then aircraft with specialized electronics, the EF 111S. In 1991, F-16Cs and F-15Es were brought to Mountain

Q4. Continued
Home, followed by B-52 bombers and then B-1B bombers and KC-135R tanks. In 2002, the bombers and tankers were assigned to other bases. All of this said, stability is a large concern in the realignment of the base. Will the Commission take this into account?
A4. The Commission will make its suggestions almost entirely based upon the military value of the installation, through an open and transparent evaluation, set forth by statute. Through this process, the Commission will evaluate the key factors, as determined by law, as well as the possible effects had by the realignment of the installation, should the DoD's suggestion be enacted.

Q5. Should DoDs suggestions be enacted, the 366th wing at Mountain Home AFB would receive 18 F-15s from from Elmendorf AFB in Alaska and would be left with only 28 of its F-15Es. Could there be a redeeming value in this for the Mountain Home AFB?
A5. The Commission's purpose is to help ensure that the US military is best able to meet changing global threats by being as streamlined and efficient as possible. As the Commission performs an evaluation and analysis of the critical factors relating to DoDs suggestion to realign the base, military value will be the most important consideration.

Q6. The town surrounding Mountain Home AFB is made up of only 11 thousand people and is 45 minutes from Boise. Clearly, it would feel the loss of such a large proportion of its jobs. Will the Commission take this into account as the Commission makes its conclusion regarding the base?
A6. The Commission is well-aware of the human impact that the suggestion to close or realign a military installation could have. All economic, environmental, and other effects will be fully evaluated by the Commission, while the Commission holds military value as its most important consideration.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE
IDAHO

National News Articles
Base Closure Commission To Visit 20 Bases This Week
Base Closure Commission To Visit Oregon, Washington This Week
BRAC Returns Idaho Air Force Mission To Traditional Role

Local News Articles
BRAC Leaves Plenty Of Time For Adjustment
Hansen Recuses Self From Vote On Hill, Says Closure Is Unlikely
Mountain Home AFB To Lose 538 Jobs

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

Base Closure Commission To Visit 20 Bases This Week
The Associated Press
Matthew Daly

The commission reviewing the Pentagon's recommended base closings will travel to 20 bases this week to learn more about military installations slated to be closed.

The nine commissioners will split into small groups to tour 20 sites in 11 states between Tuesday and Friday. The states are Alabama, Georgia, **Idaho**, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, Virginia and Washington.

"The site visits are the main forum by which our commissioners and our staff learn the details of what military activities are really happening at the base, how the Department of Defense recommendations would affect the installation and whether base closure criteria were applied correctly," Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission, said in a statement.

Commissioners "have a lot of hard work ahead of us and not a lot of time to do it," added Principi, a former U.S. Veterans Affairs secretary. "Each site visit will be packed with detailed briefings, discussions with base personnel and tours of the key facilities."

The nine-member panel, known as BRAC, has pledged to visit all bases slated for closure or major **realignment** under a plan announced May 13 by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. The plan would close 33 major bases and downsize 29 others, saving an estimated $48 billion over 20 years.

As a practical matter, groups of two or three commissioners will visit each base, preceded by an

analyst who will compile detailed information on the site, its staffing and military function.

For instance, commissioners James Bilbray and Philip Coyle are scheduled to visit Portland International Airport on Tuesday. The airport is home to an Air National Guard Base slated for a drastic downsizing.

Oregon lawmakers say the plan to transfer 452 civilian and 112 military jobs from the Portland base - as well as remove its 23 active planes - could leave the region vulnerable to attack.

Similar complaints have been made by lawmakers across the country.

Earlier this month, the military suggested pulling the Army's Armor Center and School from Fort Knox, Ky., and adding an Infantry Brigade Combat Team and other units coming home from overseas. This would shift Fort Knox's historic focus away from heavy armor to war fighting.

"They're really checking the Army's homework," said retired Brig. Gen. James E. Shane, executive director of Kentucky's Commission on Military Affairs.

The commission has until Sept. 8 to present its recommendations to President Bush. In past years, about 85 percent of base closures recommended by the Pentagon have remained on the BRAC list.

The panel has scheduled a series of public hearings on the plan this summer.

Base Closure Commission To Visit Oregon, Washington This Week
The Associated Press
Matthew Daly
May 23, 2005

The commission reviewing the Pentagon's recommended base closings will travel to 20 bases this week - including three in Oregon and Washington - to learn more about military installations affected by the plan.

The nine commissioners will split into small groups to tour 20 sites in 11 states between Tuesday and Friday.

Panel members are scheduled to tour Portland International Airport - home of a threatened Air National Guard Base - on Tuesday, before heading to Eastern Oregon Thursday to visit the Umatilla chemical weapons depot near Hermiston.

The panel also will visit McChord Air Force Base in Washington state on Wednesday.

Other states where visits are scheduled include Alabama, Georgia, **Idaho,** Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Utah and Virginia. The Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission plans 16 regional hearings across the country beginning June 7 in Salt Lake City and St. Louis.

"The site visits are the main forum by which our commissioners and our staff learn the details of what military activities are really happening at the base, how the Department of Defense recommendations would affect the installation and whether base closure criteria were applied correctly," Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Closure and **Realignment** Commission, said in a statement.

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Similar complaints have been made by lawmakers across the country.

In Washington state, the Pentagon plan would create a joint base of Fort Lewis Army Base and the adjacent McChord Air Force Base, south of Tacoma. Management of the two would be consolidated at the Army post.

Fort Lewis would gain 230 employees, while McChord would lose 567.

The commission has until Sept. 8 to present its recommendations to President Bush. In past years, about 85 percent of base closures recommended by the Pentagon have remained on the BRAC list.

The panel has scheduled a series of public hearings on the plan this summer, including a June 17 hearing in Portland. No public hearings are scheduled in Washington state.

BRAC Returns Idaho Air Force Mission To Traditional Role
The Associated Press
Chuck Oxley
May 21, 2005

After 14 years of hosting many different types of aircraft with a multitask mission, a Pentagon plan would trade most of the older F-16 and F-15 fighters currently stationed at Mountain Home for about half as many newer F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft.

The government hopes to save money by making a more homogenous flight line. Aircraft maintenance officers could order spare parts by the baker's dozen. If one plane can't fly, there would be 49 others available.

But critics argue the "efficiency model" recommended under the latest round of Base Consolidation and **Realignment** plan hurts training opportunities and unit cohesiveness when it's time to go to war.

"It is absolutely cheaper," said retired Col. Chester "Soapy" Walborn, who served as base commander for the 366th Wing in the mid-1970s. "It's also a hell of a lot dumber."

There is no indication on the base itself that 569 military and civilian employees may be shipped elsewhere, if the planes are reassigned to other units in Nevada, Florida and South Carolina.

The runway at Mountain Home remains a bustling hub of activity. The steely gray jets thunder overhead, forming tight flying formations and peeling off to practice touch-and-go landings.

The flight line is the heart of the base - 310 acres of solid concrete between the runway and the hangars. Blue delivery trucks whiz among the jets, dropping off and picking up people and parts.

In the huge wooden hangars, several aircraft mechanics said they haven't paid attention to the list of proposed base **realignments** and closures.

"Most of them are so wrapped up in their job, they're not paying attention to BRAC," said 1st Lt. Erin Tindell, a spokeswoman for the base.

The proposed BRAC plan released by the Pentagon on May 13 would in many ways return Mountain Home to the type of mission it had in the 1970s and 1980s, when the F-111 Aardvark fighter-bomber patrolled the skies above southern **Idaho.**

From 1972 to 1991, F-111s - and later, converted EF-111s, a specialized electronics warfare aircraft - were the only fixed-wing aircraft assigned to Mountain Home. They had a dual mission - to train new pilots and navigators and to be ready to pack up and fight in a war.

The mission started changing in the late 1980s, when a new concept called "Air Expeditionary Wing" was being developed, 366th wing historian Master Sgt. Yancey Mailes.

"It was designed to be a task force to go anywhere in the world to quell any uprising," Mailes said.

The plan called for five strategic air bases around the country to become self-contained fighting units made up of air-to-air and air-to-ground fighters, bombers and refueling tankers.

Select bases around the country started building these types of wings. In 1991, Mountain Home started flying F-16C models and the F-15E models. The following summer, a squadron of B-52 bombers arrived.

Two years later, the lumbering B-52s were replaced by newer B-1B bombers, along with several KC-135R tankers.

The wing that took a decade to build lasted a decade by itself. But in 2002 - with a new presidential administration - the deconstruction began.

Although the composite wing at Mountain Home saw many squadron-level deployments, the base was never deployed en masse, as the original plan envisioned.

"I don't think we ever used it the way it was intended," Walborn conceded.

In 2002, the bombers and tankers were reassigned to other bases.

If the 2005 BRAC recommendation goes forward, the 366th Wing would be left with 28 of its own $31-million two-seater F-15Es, plus it would receive 18 more F-15Es from Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska.

The recommendation for Mountain Home would "streamline the operations at a location that is well suited for air-to-ground, low-level and air-to-air flight training."

Some political heavyweights are skeptical of the move. Sen. Larry Craig, R-**Idaho,** said the base seems to be drifting.

"What concerns me as much as the economic impact on Mountain Home is that the mission has been changed twice now in the last five years," Craig said. "Stability is critically important to the future."

Col. Bill Richey, a retired staff director at the base and currently Gov. Dirk Kempthorne's military liaison, said the decades the Air Force spent on being a composite wing were not wasted.

Parts of the wing saw service in southwest Asia in 1991 and 1993. In 2001, the base's B-1B bombers flew important missions over Afghanistan, while other fighters deployed to the Arabian Peninsula and Qatar.

"The training that the aircrews went through was a tremendous benefit," Richey said. "They went out to the rest of the Air Force, where they were used to training and flying with all the kinds of missions."

But there also comes a time when the Air Force has to tighten its belt and react to new world threats, he said.

"They have the data to show the BRAC will save so many millions of dollars," Richey said. "As the world changes, the services have to change with it."

Local News Articles

BRAC Leaves Plenty Of Time For Adjustment
Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News - The State – Columbia
Chuck Crumbo
May 23, 2005

Now that the fog of the latest base-closing round has cleared, state leaders have a better idea of what South Carolina is facing in making room for new missions at its military bases and hanging on to ones scheduled to be shuttered.

Nothing will happen right away, however.

For example:

--McEntire Joint National Guard Base, near Eastover, is slated to receive nine F-16 fighter jets and 300 to 400 airmen. But they won't arrive until 2011.

--Troops and civilians assigned to S.C. units that are being closed have been told nothing will happen for four to five years, if that soon.

Meanwhile, Beaufort has learned its air base barely survived the base-closing process.

In the wake of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's May 13 recommendations to the Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission, commonly known as BRAC, there is plenty of fine print that local officials must read.

That commission has until Sept. 8 to submit a final base-closing list to President Bush. The president then has until Sept. 23 to OK the recommendations. If Bush gives his approval, Congress will have 45 legislative days to decide whether to accept the recommendations.

Then, if Congress gives its approval, things will start to move -- slowly.

Col. Ken Jefferson, operations director for the S.C. Air National Guard, said nine F-16 fighters from Mountain Home Air Force Base, **Idaho**, could start moving to McEntire in 2007. But it is possible that the jets could arrive earlier, Jefferson said.

In Charleston -- where the Pentagon recommended closing two units with 1,100 employees -- workers have been told the closures could take years. For example, workers at a naval engineering office that oversees $ 1.5 billion in military construction in 26 states were told it would take four or five years to close that unit.

Meanwhile, Charleston officials plan to appeal the Pentagon's closure decisions.

In addition, the Pentagon's recommendations essentially call for the elimination of the commander's job and 250 other positions at the Charleston Naval Weapons Station, said Tom Mikolajcik, co-chairman of Charleston's base-saving efforts.

Under the plan, Charleston Air Force Base would handle utilities, security, streets and other management functions for the weapons station. But the Pentagon made no provision for increasing the size of the staff at the air base, said Mikolajcik, a retired Air Force brigadier general and former commander of the Charleston air base.

While Charleston officials deal with those details, Beaufort leaders are learning that their Marine Corps Air Station was once on the Pentagon's chopping block.

In a report that followed up Rumsfeld's recommendations, the Navy said the Beaufort installation was the Marines Corps' "lowest military value jet base on the East Coast."

Closing the Beaufort base, home to eight F/A-18 squadrons, would save money, the report added. But the Navy, which includes the Marine Corps, decided against closing Beaufort to preserve its future options if another East Coast base is shuttered.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., whose district includes Beaufort, said the Navy recognized the importance of the Beaufort air base's "current and future mission capabilities, and the base's impact on overall operational readiness."

"He's confident that the base will remain an asset to the Department of Defense for years to come," the spokeswoman added.

Hansen Recuses Self From Vote On Hill, Says Closure Is Unlikely
Salt Lake Tribune (Utah)
Matthew D. LaPlante and Robert Gehrke
May 21, 2005

Hill Air Force Base's biggest advocate on a federal commission reviewing military base closures has recused himself from voting on matters directly involving Utah's military installations.

But Jim Hansen doesn't feel the commission will vote on his home state's bases anyway -- a sign that the former U.S. representative believes Beehive State installations are safe from a direct attack.

A vote of the full commission is required to add any installations to the Defense Department's recommended closure list, released last week.

"I doubt there will be a vote on Hill or any other base," Hansen said in an interview Friday.

Hansen does, however, plan to be the Base **Realignment** and Closure Commission's representative on a visit to Hill next week. He will follow that with a visit to Mountain Home Air Force Base in **Idaho,** which under the Pentagon's plan would lose upwards of 650 positions.

Representatives from the southwest **Idaho** community likely will be among those at a June 7 hearing in Salt Lake City, scheduled so that communities adversely affected by the Pentagon's plan can "educate the Commissioners and their staff on their disagreements with the Department of Defense base recommendations," Commission Chairman Anthony Principi said in a statement Thursday.

The regional hearing is among 16 scheduled to be held in June and July. The commission has until Sept. 8 to report its findings and suggestions to President Bush.

Rep. Rob Bishop said he was disappointed by the June 7 date, saying he had anticipated a meeting in mid-July.

"That's extremely tight for our staff to try to get everything ready," Bishop said.

Hansen's recusal does not necessarily prevent him from casting ballots that could indirectly affect Utah.

Bishop noted that some commissioners had questioned why New Mexico's Cannon Air Force Base should be closed.

Under the Pentagon's plan, six of Cannon's F-16 fighter jets would go to flying units at Hill, which in exchange would release some of its older jets to another base.

"If they take the 30s from Hill and don't bring the 40s we could really be in big trouble," said Bishop, referring to the jets by their numerical production block identifier. "Here once again is where Jim Hansen is going to play a key role in ensuring we're treated fairly."

Mountain Home AFB To Lose 538 Jobs
Political State Report
Julie Fanselow
May 13, 2005

Friday the 13th brought bad news for Idaho's Mountain Home Air Force Base, though it could've been worse. If enacted as planned, the Pentagon's closure and realignment scheme will strip the base's military force by about 12 percent, or 538 jobs, plus 31 civilian positions. The military also plans to draw down forces at Gowen Air Guard in Boise for a loss of 22 military and 61 civilian jobs, plus close its Navy Reserve Center in Pocatello, where 70 people would lose their jobs.

Idaho officials reacted with surprise to the announcement, since Mountain Home AFB's high-tech training range just received a $35 million upgrade less than a decade ago. But that same range - with some of the best nation's flying conditions - probably helped Mountain Home escape a worse fate than the realignment plan, which will move forty-two of its F-15C and F-16 fighter jets to other bases while bringing eighteen more F-15E fighter jets here from Alaska. According to news reports, the Air Force intends to streamline operations by having only one type of aircraft at the base. Rep. Mike Simpson told Gannett News Service that although he is concerned with the loss of jobs, "Maybe it's in the best long-term interest of Mountain Home if that is the plan that fits best for the military overall and that's Mountain Home's niche in the plan."

There's little question that Mountain Home will feel the losses of so many jobs. On the other hand, the town of 11,000 sits 45 minutes from Boise, at the heart of one of the nation's fastest-growing metro areas. Most of the region's growth has been to the west, in Meridian, Eagle, Kuna, and Nampa. But eventually, the growth will occur out Mountain Home's way, too.

Here's what southwest Idaho needs to do: Build light rail from Mountain Home to Nampa, with clusters of affordable housing and shopping near the rail stations. Take advantage of Mountain Home's excellent, albeit breezy, weather to ramp up research into wind and solar energy. Directing more growth toward the southwest (Mountain Home) would help relieve the crunch on I-84 west of Boise and diversify Mountain Home's economy. That would be a win-win situation for communities across the region.

Opinions/ Editorials

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Talking Points for Visit to McChord AFB

1. **Military value is the most important consideration to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) as the Commission evaluates the suggestion made by the Department of Defense (DoD) to realign McChord Air Force Base.**
    - While the Commission will evaluate the economic, environmental, and other effects that the realignment of the installation could have on the surrounding community but the most important consideration in the Commission's evaluation is the military value of the installation.
    - The Commission understands the unique role that McChord AFB serves in Washington as a logistical supporter of the Army. The installation's military value, as such, will be taken into full account by the Commission.

2. **The Commission is aware of the human impact that the suggestion to realign McChord AFB could have, should the suggestion be enacted.**
    - The Congress established the Commission as an independent entity to ensure that all critical factors have been evaluated, and that the effects on the surrounding community have been taken into account in the decision to recommend a base for closure or realignment.
    - The Commission will evaluate the economic impact that the installation realignment would have on the surrounding community, while basing its decision almost entirely upon military value.
    - McChord AFB has served a critical role in providing for the security of the U.S. since its inception in 1938. Most recently, McChord has been a critical provider of airlift operations to the United States Army.

3. **The Congress established the Commission as a non-political, transparent, and independent entity to perform a thorough evaluation, through a process set out by law, of the bases suggested for closure or realignment by DoD.**
    - The Commission serves to ensure that all pertinent factors have been evaluated and that the impact that the suggestions to close or realign a base would have on the surrounding community, have been taken into full account.
    - The Commission encourages community input. The public may submit comments directly through the Commission's official website: www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
Suggested Q's & A's for Visit to McChord AFB

Q1. The current DoD proposal to merge McChord AFB and Fort Lewis reflects a new trend aimed toward increased jointness in the military. Pope AFB and Fort Bragg are also scheduled to merge into one installation. Does the Commission anticipate that these new "joint" installations will be successful?
A1. The Department of Defense (DoD) has based its determination of military value largely upon jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in today's changing global threats. The major difference in these two proposals is the Air Force's intended use of Pope. Unlike McChord AFB which would retain a sizeable air component, Pope AFB would be left with only a small contingent of air power. The task of the Commission is to ensure that the suggestion to close or realign a military installation has been made in full accordance with the law.

Q2. What is the Commission's understanding of the primary reason to merge Fort Lewis with McChord AFB?
A2. DoD has delineated military value to consist of factors such as jointness, ease of mobility, and the base's strategic role in meeting today's changing global threats. As such, McChord's core mission is to provide airlift to the U.S. Army-particularly Army units right next door at Fort Lewis. There is a certain amount of administrative duplication at the two bases. In addition, there are separate medical facilities maintained at each.

Q3. For the community, the Fort Lewis-McChord AFB merger would carry an economic cost. Estimates state that consolidation could eliminate 700-plus jobs (military and civilian) at the two installations. Will the Commission consider the economic implications of the DoD recommendations?
A3. The Congress established the Commission as an independent entity to evaluate--in a thorough, non-political and accurate way, as prescribed by statute--the suggestions made by DoD to close or realign bases around the county. As such, the Commissions primary criteria used by the Commission for evaluating the DoD's recommendations is the military value of the base. However, the Commission will also consider the economic, environmental, and other affects that the realignment of the base could have on the surrounding community.

Q4. What is the benefit of merging the two bases in the long-run?
A4. Although economic hardships may have to be endured by the local community in the short-run, the merger would create a leaner and more cost-effective operation which in the long-run may benefit from future DoD programs. The most important consideration is that we keep the United States secure, and as such, the Commission will evaluate the suggestions by DoD to close or realign military installations.

Q5. How can the Community make the Commission aware of information that the Community feels may have been overlooked by DoD?

A5. The BRAC Commission encourages community input into this transparent and objective process. The public may submit comments through the Commission's official website, which is www.brac.gov.

Facts compiled from included press clippings.

McCHORD AIR FORCE BASE
WASHINGTON

National News Articles
Military Makeover
BRAC Commission Hears How Army Realignment Will Build Future Force

Local News Articles
Mcchord, Fort Lewis Headed For Marriage?; A Proposal To Consolidate The Two South Sound Bases Would Make Them Leaner And More Attractive To The Pentagon.

Opinions/ Editorials

National News Articles

BRAC Commission Hears How Army Realignment Will Build Future Force
FDCH Federal Department and Agency Documents
REGULATORY INTELLIGENCE DATA
May 18, 2005

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, May 18, 2005) - The planned closures of many Army Reserve and National Guard centers and several military installations, and the return of units from overseas were among the primary concerns expressed when Army officials testified before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission May 18.

Under the Army's current recommendations, the 2005 BRAC would close 15 installations, seven leased sites, 176 Army Reserve installations, and 211 Army National Guard facilities. It will also create seven training "centers of excellence," seven joint technical and research facilities, and four joint material and logistics facilities

Giving primary information for the Army were Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Infrastructure Development Craig College.

"The recommendations of BRAC 2005 will holistically transform the current infrastructure into a streamlined portfolio of installations with an 11- percent increase in military value which, thereby, enables the operational Army to better meet the challenges of the 21st-century security environment," Harvey told the commission.

Rebase troops

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, who chairs the commission, started the questioning by asking Schoomaker about the return of troops from overseas.

"With regard to rebasing the 70,000 overseas troops, they don't add up to 70,000 in the numbers

we have," Principi said.

Schoomaker said the Army's portion of the 70,000 troops to be rebased is only 47,000, of which 22,000 are in units that will stand down and be reassigned in the new modular force structure. He said the remainder is made up of larger units that will return from overseas and be distributed to large installations such as Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Lewis, Wash. and Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

College told the commission these major moves will take place over a period of years.

Principi also asked if the movement of large units to Fort Bliss might overload the area's communities, or lead to water-supply problems in the area's dry climate.

"All of this is informed by the national military defense strategy which adds 10 brigades to the Army force structure and 34 brigades to the National Guard and Reserve," Schoomaker said. He said Fort Bliss offered the right mix of maneuver space, unrestricted airspace, free radio spectrum for the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and access to sister services.

Commissioner Sue Ellen Turner asked if the closure of Red River Army Depot, Texas, called for in the BRAC plan is a good idea in the wake of media reports of difficulty fielding items such as up-armored Humvees.

Harvey said the Army has an excess production capacity, and it will be enhanced by creating "centers of excellence" in specific fields.

"In the past 50 years, the highest number of direct labor hours we've ever used is 25 million. By closing Red River and creating centers of excellence, we can surge to 50 million direct labor hours," he said.

Transforming the National Guard, Reserve

Commissioner Samuel Skinner asked about the closure of National Guard and Reserve centers, and their consolidation into joint centers.

"I guess it's like 'Field of Dreams.' You're saying that if you build these world-class facilities, you hope the Guard will come," Skinner said.

Schoomaker said the Army is continuing to work toward a "one-Army" concept.

"The Guard and Reserve are increasingly important to that one-Army concept," he said. "What we're doing is taking overstructure out of the Guard and Reserve and making them into whole units. You said it pretty well. We are committed to building 125 facilities with the hopes that 211 state facilities will align into them."

Specially sworn in to testify, Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, told the commission the states have cooperated with the Army's analysis of which sites will be closed under the current plan.

"These realignments started from field submissions," Schultz said. "They have been line-time detail reviewed by the state leaderships."

Harvey said that the new joint centers will be constructed in the same areas as the old bases slated

for closure. "We plan them for the same demographic area, within a 50 mile radius of where they were before," he said.

"There are two points about this," Schoomaker said. "The first is the obvious opportunity to improve training and retention. The second, as we look at this movement we would expect to see divestiture of the old sites, and direct our funding into these 125 centers."

Combining bases

Commissioner James Hill said he was pleased to see DoD "get it right" by combining Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg N.C., in the current BRAC proposal He asked why similar steps aren't planned for **McChord Air Force Base** and Fort Lewis, Wash.

"The big difference is the Air Force's intended use of Pope. They'll be leaving only a small element there," College said. "So it makes sense to have a single entity under Army control. McChord will retain a large Air Force presence." He said the current study is to determine how the bases might share suppliers and support services.

Hill also returned to the subject of increasing the troop numbers at Fort Bliss, asking if there were environmental issues to address. Schoomaker said the environmental issues there are minimal, and the base will be well served by being close to additional training pace at White Sands, and Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., and Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz.

Hill also asked why the Army had decided to put its decisions regarding leased property inside the BRAC plan. "You could have terminated those leases if you wanted," he said.

College said BRAC was the appropriate time to analyze and address the use of leased property.

"If you're going to take on the issue of the high cost of leased space, it should be looked at to determine how that infrastructure would work to support the team. We thought BRAC is the precise tool to look at it in a comprehensive way, rather than taking small steps over time."

Hill's final question concerned the move of research and development from Fort Monmouth, N.J., to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Harvey called the move "a judgment call," but said because Monmouth is relatively close to Maryland that he expects more of the high-tech specialists from Monmouth will make the move than would happen with a larger geographic move.

Commissioner Philip Coyle asked about the many differences between this round of BRAC and previous rounds.

Schoomaker said the current round of BRAC is allowing the Army to accomplish numerous goals as the force structure changes.

"We have the opportunity to set the force the way we want it to be in the future," he said.

Military Makeover
U.S. News & World Report
Julian E. Barnes
May 23, 2005

After five years of preaching the necessity of a nimbler military, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last week took perhaps the most important step in the quest to turn his vision of the future into reality.

The announcement that the Defense Department would propose closing 33 of the nation's 425 major bases sent shudders through communities from Kittery, Maine, to Clovis, N.M. While some cities like Corpus Christi, Texas, would probably little notice the economic impact of the closure, other places, like Rapid City, S.D., would surely feel the loss of their bases acutely. Although Rumsfeld and other officials acknowledged the economic turbulence to come, they emphasized that they were taking advantage of an opportunity to reorganize the armed forces and change the way the nation fights.

There have been four previous rounds of base realignment and closure--BRAC in Pentagon patois--since 1988, and they were all fundamentally about saving money by doing away with unneeded facilities. The government estimates it saved $ 29 billion between 1988 and 2003 by closing 97 major bases and scores of minor facilities. This time around the Pentagon certainly intends to save money--a projected $ 49 billion to $ 64 billion over two decades. But today reshaping the military is as important as reducing waste. With brigades of tanks stationed in Europe, overlapping domestic research facilities, underused naval stations, and duplicative training centers, Rumsfeld believes America's bases are still arrayed for yesterday's fight, not tomorrow's. "Current arrangements pretty much designed for the Cold War must give way to the new demands of war against extremists and other evolving 21st-century challenges," Rumsfeld said.

As a result, the Pentagon's list contained more reshuffling than outright closure. Fort Knox, Ky., for example, would lose its armor center and school to Fort Benning, Ga., which already has the Army's infantry school--but it would receive a new brigade and combat support units returning from overseas. Each service has a list of shuffled combat brigades, ships, and fighter squadrons. "We got to ask ourselves: If we were king for a day, how would we redo the Air Force?" says Maj. Gen. Gary Heckman, who helped oversee that service's realignment.

No meddling. The realignment of bases provides Rumsfeld with perhaps his most important opportunity to reshape the military for years to come. Although the secretary has managed to kill off some weapons programs he regards as legacies of the Cold War, many of his attempts at modernization have been hampered by lawmakers. But the base closure system has been well designed to keep congressional meddling to a minimum. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission, appointed by President Bush, will now review the Pentagon recommendations and has until September to make changes, though major revisions are unlikely. President Bush then reviews the list and sends it to Congress, which must consider the proposal as a whole; if the legislators don't reject it within 45 days, the closure recommendations go into effect.

Still, there is sure to be congressional opposition. New England was particularly hard hit by the proposed loss of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine and the New London submarine base in Connecticut. Those decisions will most likely spark a fight, despite Congress's limited ability to tinker with the list. The restrictions have increased the amount of grumbling about the process in recent years, and so this round of realignment is likely to be Rumsfeld's last. "You have one shot, and you are not going to have another for a decade," says Ken Beeks, vice president of Business Executives for National Security.

Rumsfeld believes America is ill-served by having heavy forces sitting in garrisons in Germany or even South Korea. Indeed, Rumsfeld began asking his regional commanders about American

troops stationed overseas back in August 2001. "All of these questions Rumsfeld asked led us to the strong conclusion that globally we were in a Cold War posture," says Ray DuBois, the acting under secretary of the Army. "And you have to ask yourself: What sort of posture do we need for the next 20 years?"

Location. The essential belief inside Rumsfeld's Pentagon is that because of restrictions other nations put on U.S. troop movements, forces can move to a conflict from the United States as fast as they can from a foreign base--as long as they are positioned domestically near railheads and airports. The Pentagon plans to move about 70,000 troops stationed overseas back home, but there are some who have raised doubts. Last week, to the dismay of the Pentagon, a commission appointed by Congress released a report that questioned the details of the overseas withdrawal. Al Cornella, the commission chairman, said that he did not disagree with Rumsfeld's overall vision but added that the Pentagon is moving too fast. Before the military leaves Germany, Cornella says, the Pentagon must be sure it has enough ships and cargo planes to deploy troops from America quickly. "We will get one chance to do [this]," he said, "and we want to do it right."

The decision to redeploy American troops from Korea and Germany to domestic bases has blunted some of the pain of base closure. Some of the bases that have been considered for closure in earlier rounds, like Fort Riley, Kan., and Fort Carson, Colo., were designated by the Pentagon last week for expansion--because of large training areas and newly renovated railroad connections that allow rapid deployment. Another winner was Texas: Fort Bliss will receive troops coming home from Germany. Some could not resist pointing out that it also made for good politics to move troops back to Colorado, Texas, and Kansas. "Those are red states by the way, if you haven't noticed," says Bill Nash, a retired major general now with the Council on Foreign Relations. "This is a great opportunity to take care of your friends and lessen the impact of BRAC."

The closure list also reflects Rumsfeld's desire for an integrated military in which the Army, Navy, and Air Force not only fight together but train side by side and share facilities. In years past, individual services have largely chosen which bases will close. This time around, Rumsfeld was determined to change the process. "The Rumsfeld people . . . are making the services work together," says Christopher Hellman, a military analyst with the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

And the final list reflects that emphasis. Walter Reed Army Medical Center would be largely shuttered and combined with the National Naval Medical Center to create a joint hospital. "Does it really matter what uniform a doctor wears?" Hellman asks. Pentagon officials also pointed to their proposal to create combined training centers for cooks and truck drivers at Fort Lee, Va. (at the expense of Lackland Air Force Base, Texas). Several Army and Air Force bases like Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and Fort Lewis and **McChord Air Force Base** in Washington State would consolidate their operations. And the 7th Special Forces Group would leave Fort Bragg, N.C., to work with Air Force Special Operations at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

In previous rounds, about 15 percent of the Pentagon decisions have been overturned by the BRAC commission. Pentagon officials believe this time there will be fewer overrides, in part because of new rules and in part because they believe the services have done a better job of evaluating what's needed. The next months will show whether that confidence is merited. But even if the list remains relatively unchanged, it will take years to see just how successful Rumsfeld's plan is. It is easy to talk about making the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines work together more closely. It is more difficult to make it happen.

Local News Articles

Mcchord, Fort Lewis Headed For Marriage?; A Proposal To Consolidate The Two South Sound Bases Would Make Them Leaner And More Attractive To The Pentagon.
The News Tribune (Tacoma, Washington)
May 17, 2005

One of the curve balls from the latest round of military base closures was a plan to merge **McChord Air Force Base** and Fort Lewis into a single installation. The proposal took even the local base commanders by surprise.

On paper, at least, Joint Base Lewis-McChord does appear to make sense.

McChord's core mission is to provide airlift to the U.S. Army - particularly Army units right next door at Fort Lewis. There's also a certain amount of administrative duplication at the two bases, not to mention the separate medical facilities maintained at each.

The idea presumably is to eliminate that duplication and achieve economies by combining health care delivery and the management of land, vehicles and offices. Fort Lewis would take over these responsibilities from McChord.

This actually isn't a novel concept. McChord, which began life as a civilian air field, became a base of the Army Air Corps when it was turned over to the U.S. military in 1938. It wasn't until after the Air Corps evolved into an independent branch of service - the U.S. Air Force - that McChord ceased to be an Army installation.

The proposed Lewis-McChord merger is part of a larger strategy championed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He has been pushing for seamless coordination among all four branches of service: the Navy, Marines, Army and Air Force. Rumsfeld is also proposing to create six other joint bases elsewhere in the United States.

The independence - and outright rivalry - of the branches has not always worked to the country's advantage. It has spawned considerable duplication of missions and equipment, some of it unnecessary. A lack of coordination among them has sometimes hurt military operations, as when Army soldiers in the first gulf war were unable to communicate by radio with Air Force pilots sent to assist them.

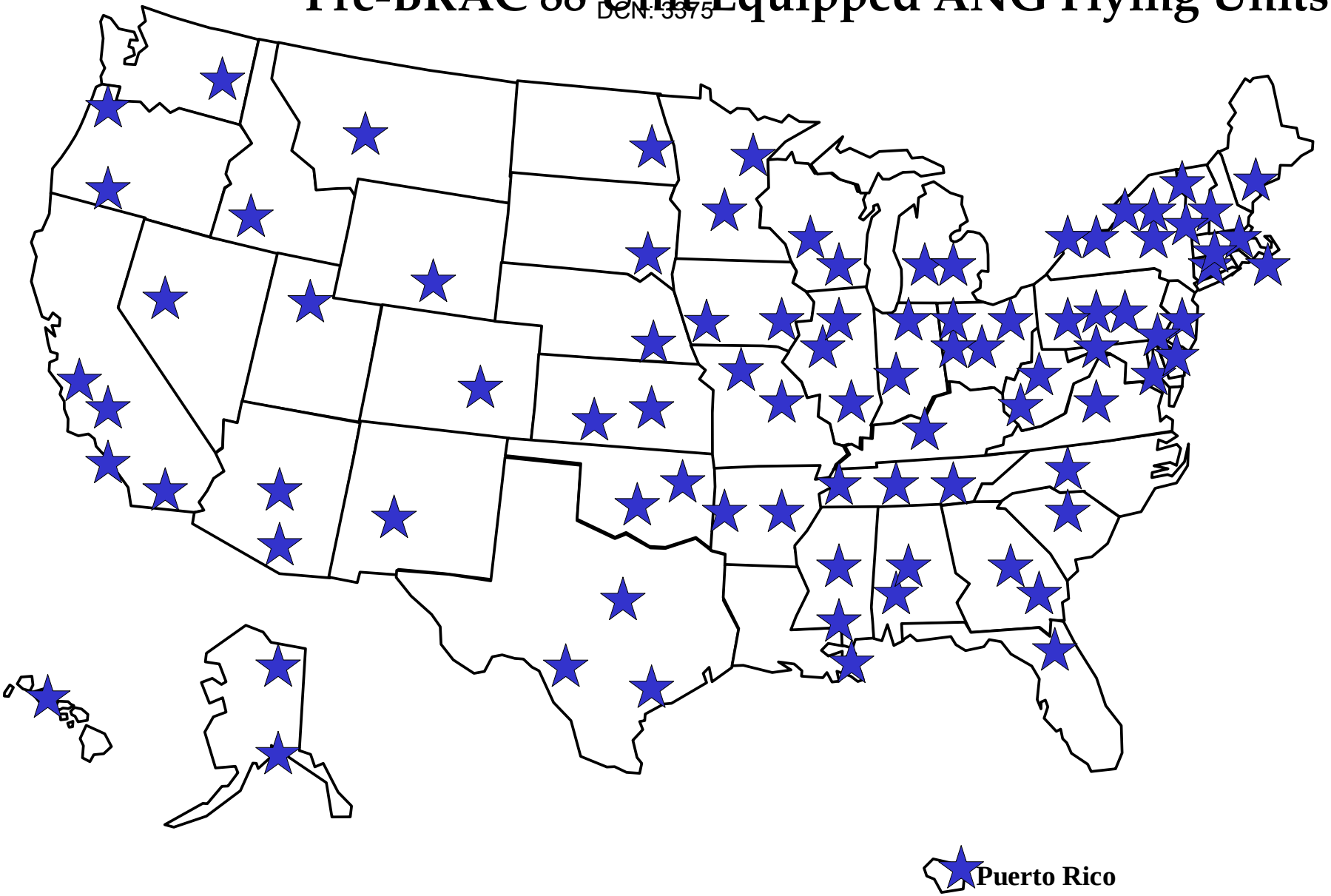
Efforts to break down these interservice barriers are generally a good thing. For the South Sound civilian economy, however, the Lewis-McChord merger would carry a cost. Consolidation could eliminate 700-plus jobs, military and civilian, at the two installations by 2011.

Yet the paring of the payroll would save the Pentagon many millions of dollars - a good result for the nation. And by making Lewis-McChord a leaner and more cost-effective operation, the merger would enhance the joint base's value to the Defense Department as the U.S. military is reshaped in future years. A little pain now might help the South Sound avoid a lot of pain later.

Opinions/ Editorials

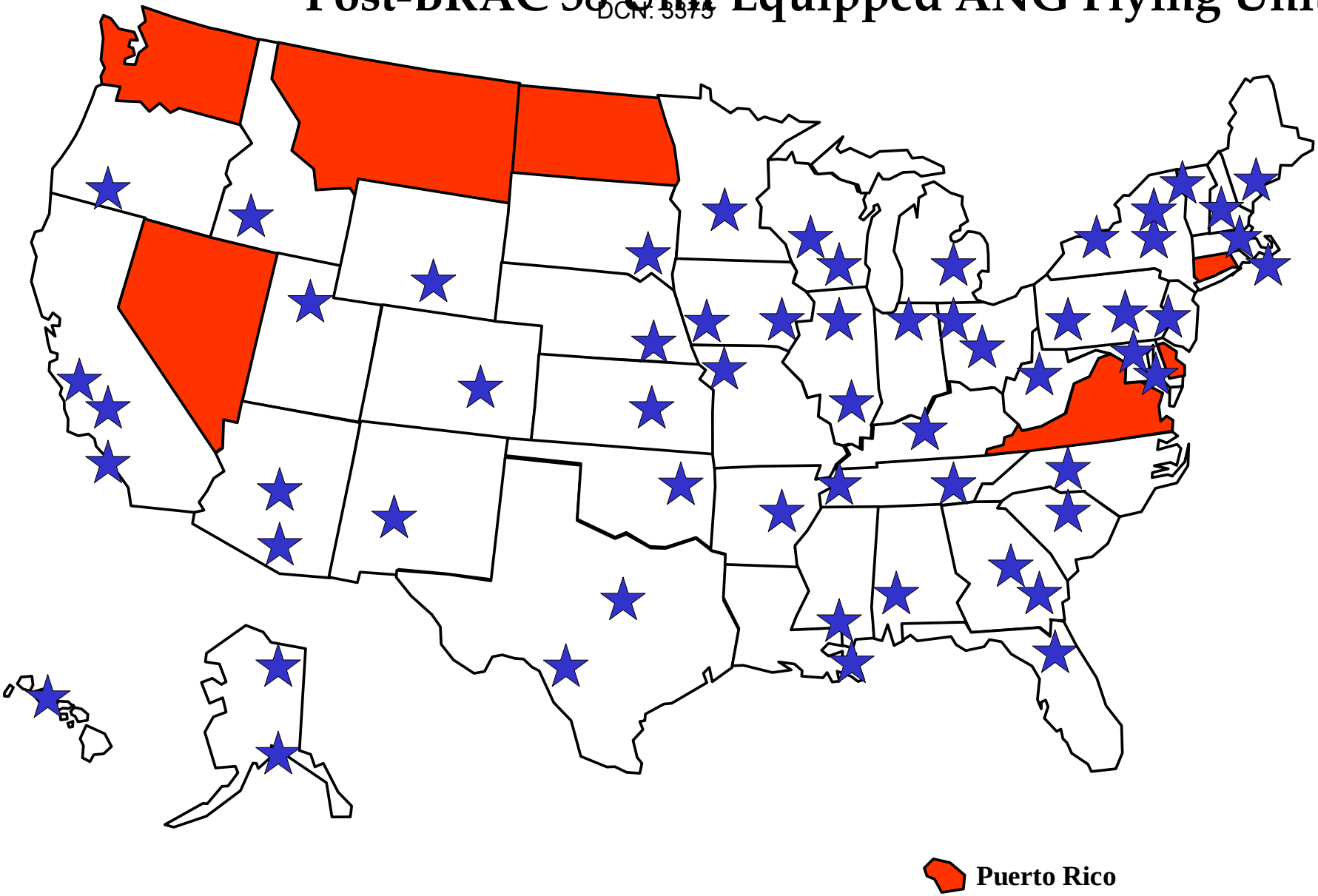
Pre-BRAC 88 Unit Equipped ANG Flying Units

DCN: 3375



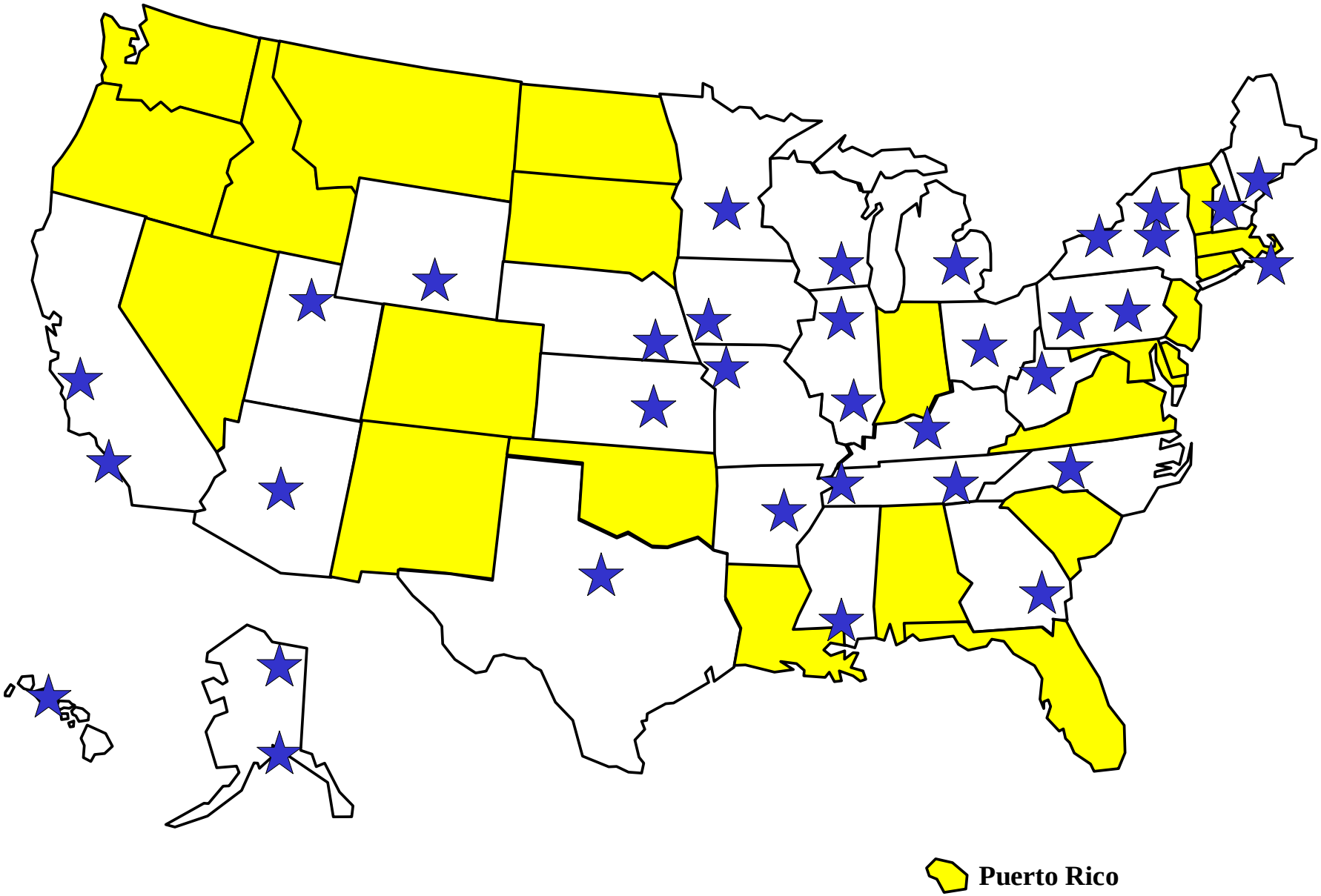
Post-BRAC 58 Unit Equipped ANG Flying Units

DCN: 3375



Post BRAC - Stars indicate ANG Air Mobility Wings

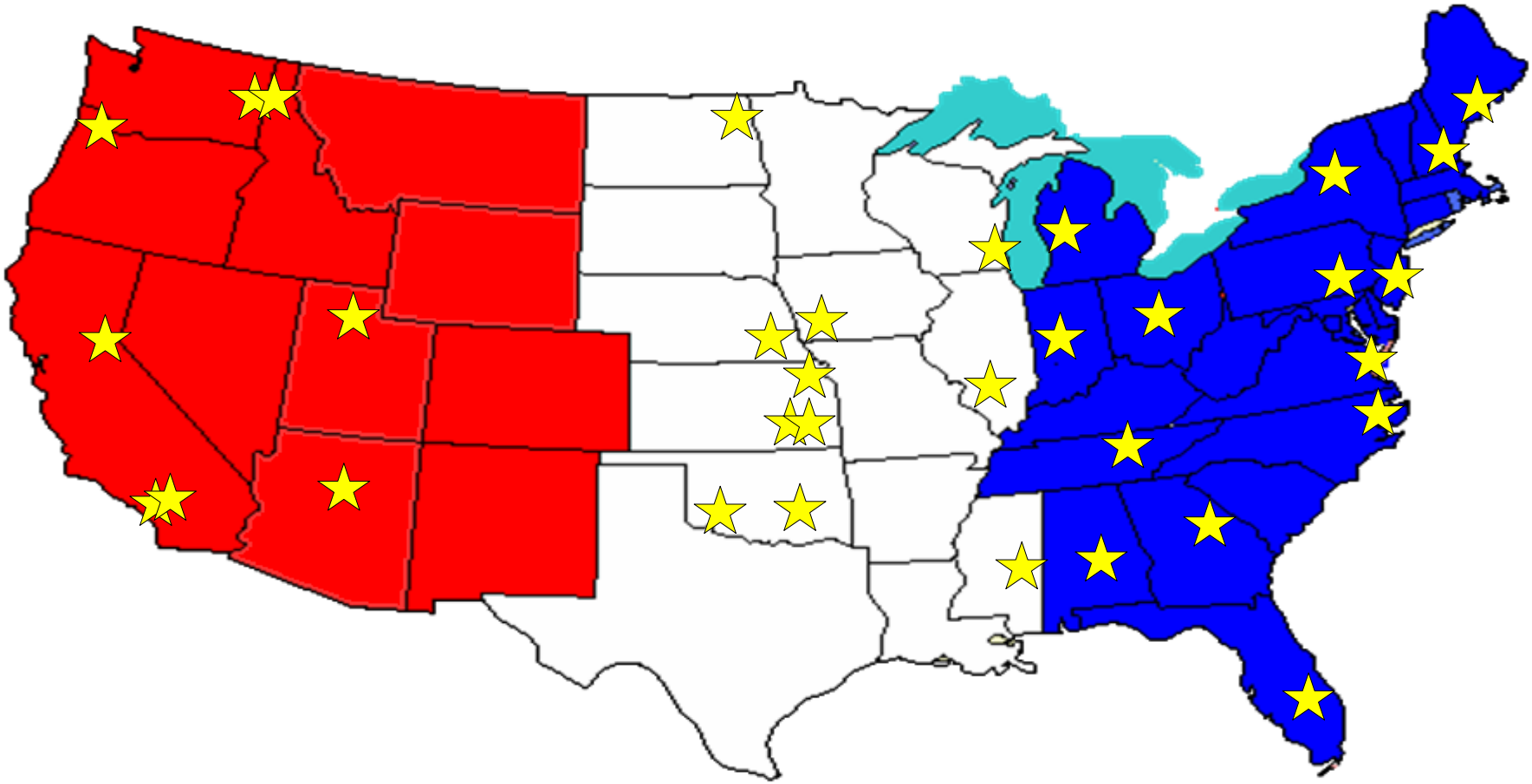
DCN: 3375



Yellow - States with no emergency airlift avail to Governor

DCN: 3375

Pre-BRAC KC-135 Distribution



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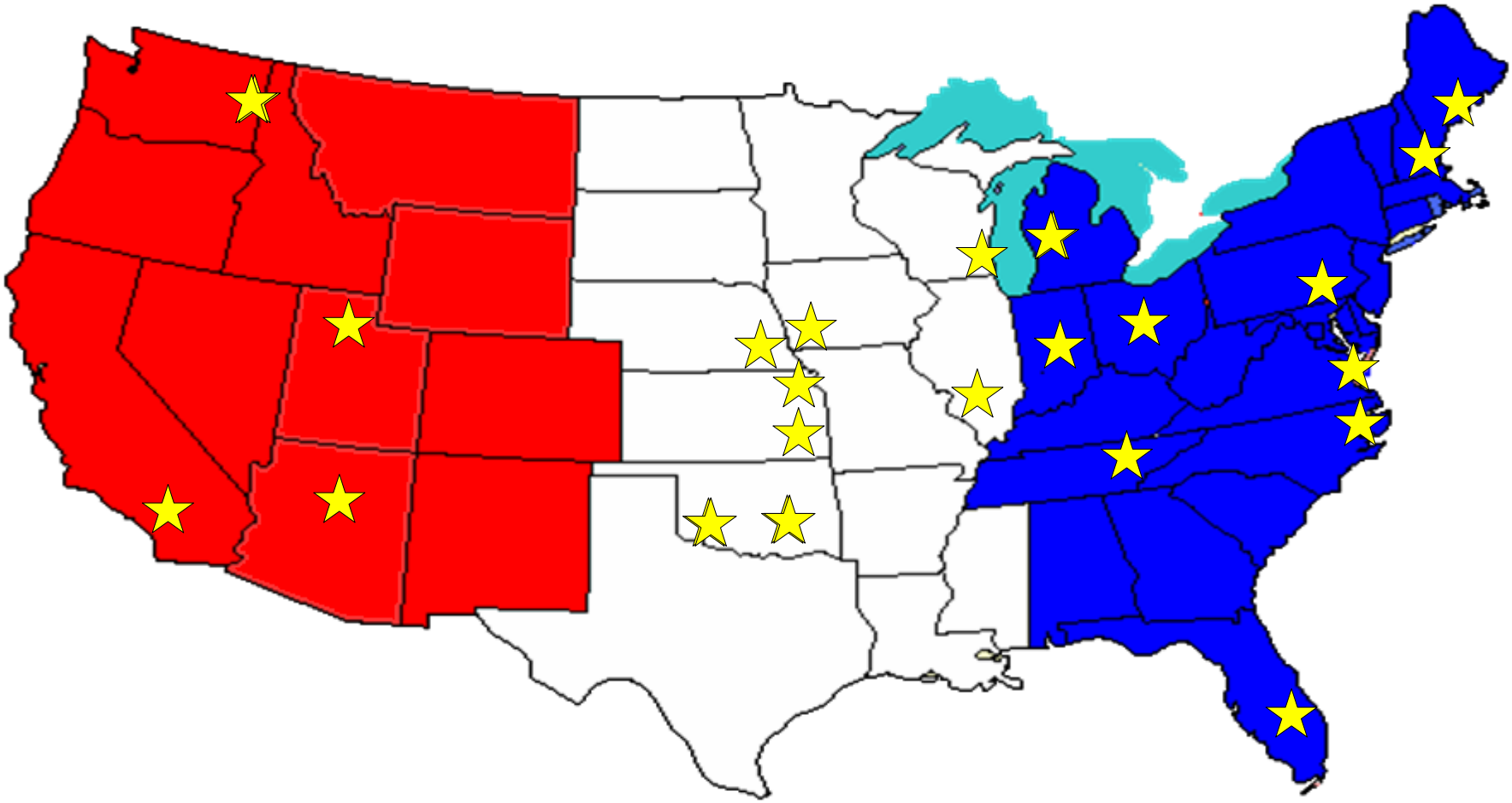
DCN: 3375

Post-BRAC KC-135 Redistribution



60	136	138
-31%	-13%	-11%

Strategic Significance

DCN: 3375

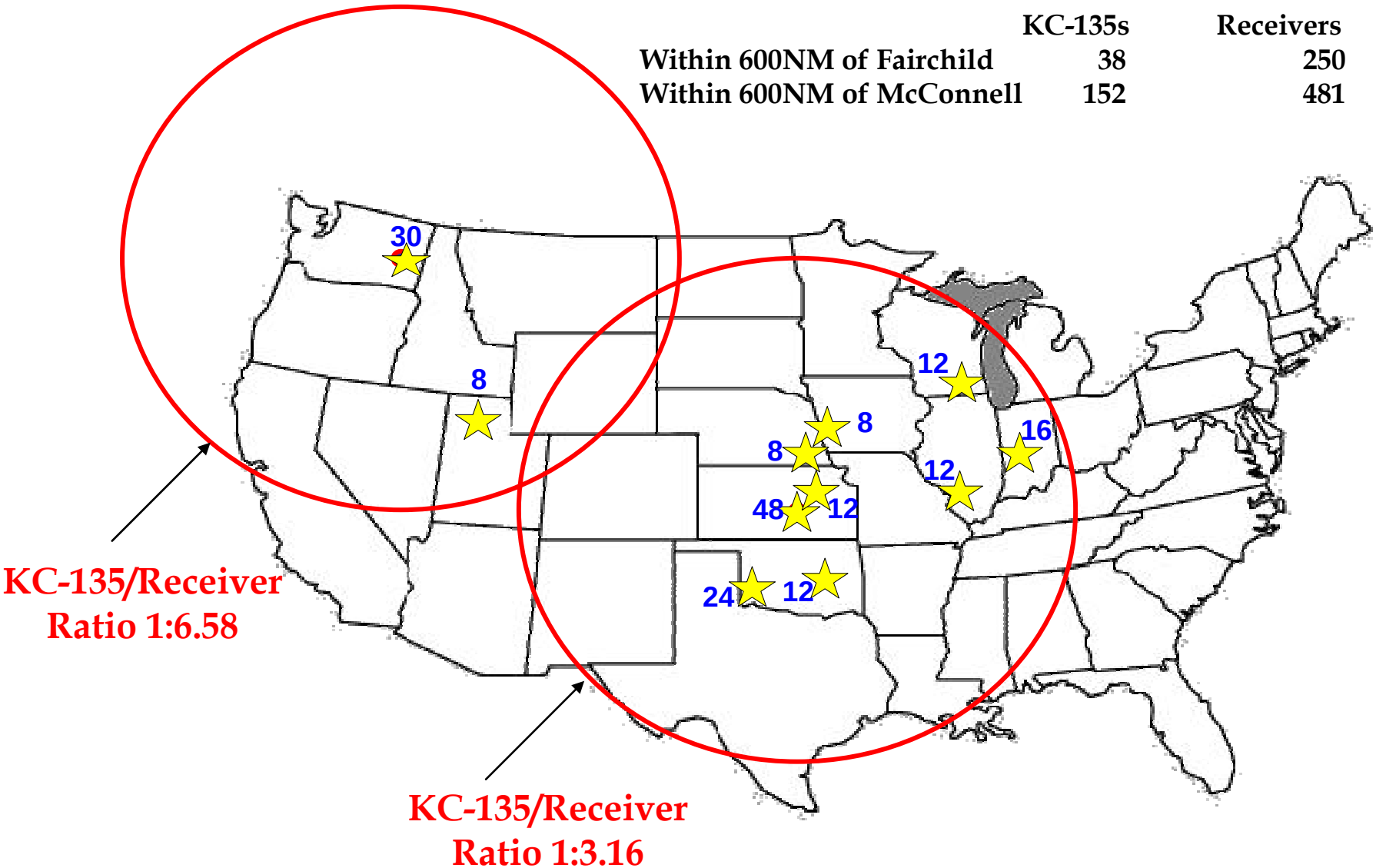
1,025 Fewer Nautical Miles To Fly Means
Greater Capability For Pacific Missions

-Each Fairchild KC-135 Has Approximately 28,000 Lbs More Fuel To Offload
-Enroute Times Are Approximately 2 Hours, 30 Minutes Shorter

Fairchild and McConnell KC-135/Receiver Ratios: 600 NM

DCN: 3375

	KC-135s	Receivers
Within 600NM of Fairchild	38	250
Within 600NM of McConnell	152	481



Fairchild Will Lose nearly 50% Of Its Primary Assigned KC-135s

FY	Active Duty	ANG
2003	48	10
2004	36	8
2005	30	8
2006	30	8
2007	30	0
⋮		
2011	*30 + ?? KC-X*	*0*

WASHINGTON STATE BRAC TESTIMONY

June 17, 2005
Portland, OR

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in order to offer inputs regarding the impact of the BRAC plan for the State of Washington. My name is Frank Scoggins and I am appearing in front of you today in my state capacity as the Assistant Adjutant General/Washington Air National Guard. In my prepared remarks, I am representing the assessments and concerns of Governor Gregoire and The Adjutant General, MGen Timothy Lowenberg, as well as my own. The Governor is on a Trade Mission in Europe or she would be here in person. I am submitting a letter to your Commission on her behalf. MGen Lowenberg was also unable to attend today, but he sends his appreciation for your time.

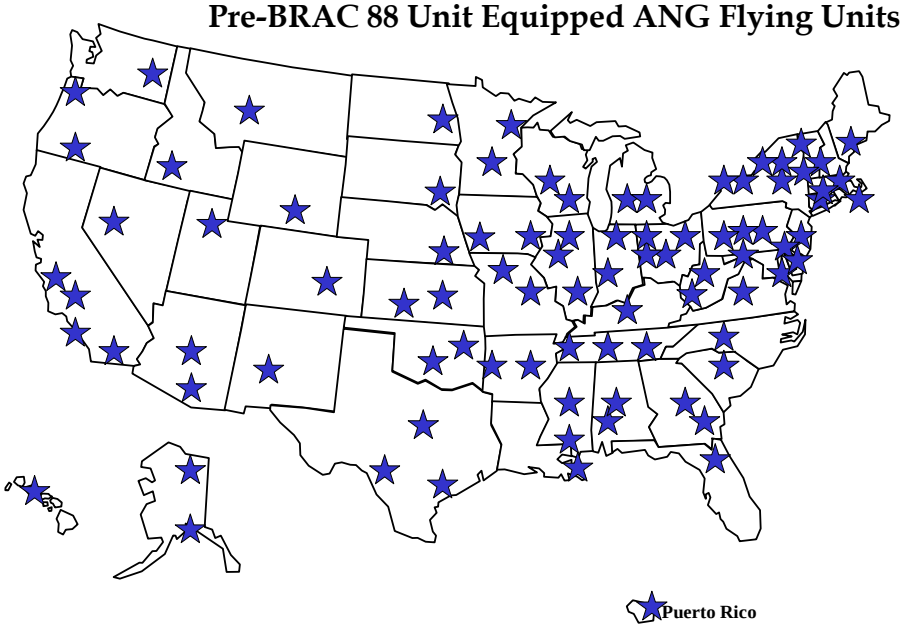
Let me begin by stating that the Governor fully embraces the majority of the recommendations of the BRAC proposal as it relates to Washington State. The Army and Navy processes approaching the release of BRAC were as collaborative as allowable and there were no significant surprises. The results of their recommendations will allow the citizens, industries, and governments of Washington to continue to strongly support the nation's defense requirements. Even more importantly, there are no implications in the Army or Navy recommendations that would negatively affect the state in regard to the Governor's responsibilities for Homeland Security.

All of the concerns that I will address today revolve around the USAF recommendations and the negative impacts that we believe those recommendations will have if they are implemented. We have no doubt that their intentions were good, but the process was extremely closed. It is our belief that there are serious unintended long term consequences if the USAF recommendations are fully adopted.

I have four issues to discuss today. First, I will address consequences of the proposed BRAC recommendation that we feel will negatively impact the connectivity of America with her United States Air Force. Then I will address the Governor's concern about a lack of emergency airlift that will remain in the Northwest under the current plan. I will follow-on with a request that you look at the shortfalls caused by an apparent imbalance of the distribution of KC-135 aircraft under BRAC. A closing point will be made regarding potential Air Sovereignty Homeland Security deficiencies.

The first issue is one that affects the entire nation. Slide 1 is illustrated with stars that depict the location of the eighty-eight unit equipped flying wings that exist in the Air National Guard today. The definition of a unit equipped flying wing is one that has the responsibility for the management, maintenance, and operation of an assigned number of aircraft.

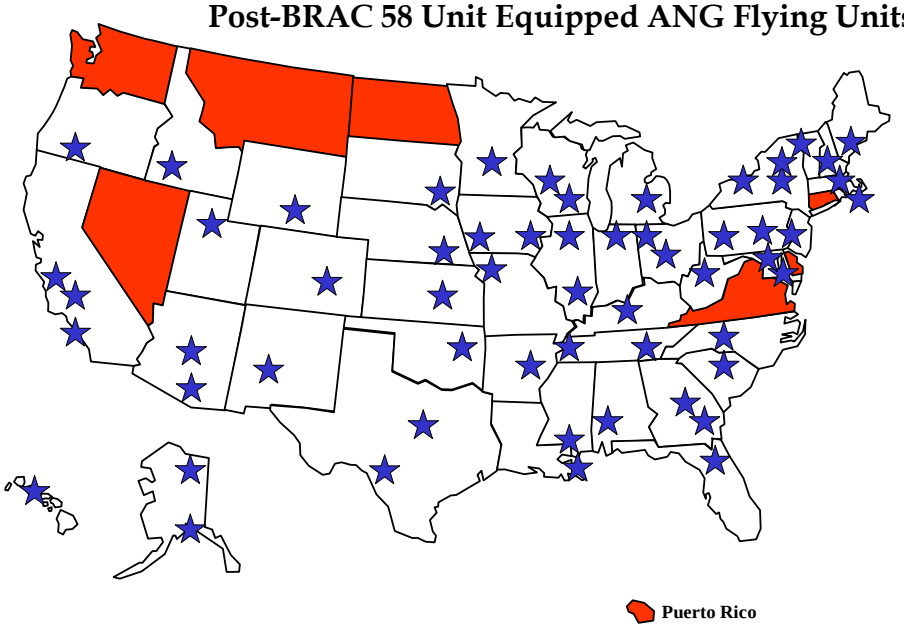
Pre-BRAC 88 Unit Equipped ANG Flying Units



Slide 1

The basing recommendations made by the USAF for the BRAC would result in the removal of over one third of these unit equipped wings. As shown on Slide 2, the proposed basing of the remaining Air National Guard Wings would leave seven states and Puerto Rico without a unit equipped flying wing as depicted in this illustration. Two of those states, Montana and Washington, are present at today's forum.

Post-BRAC 58 Unit Equipped ANG Flying Units



Slide 2

The Adjutants General of the United States have gone on record that they understand that the recapitalization of the Air Force will require a reduction in both USAF and Air National Guard flying force structure. They are not resistant to a proportional reduction that will provide for America's future Airpower needs. They believe, however, changes of this magnitude should be done in consultation with the Adjutants General, and failure of the Air Force to do so has produced a BRAC basing methodology, if adopted, will have the unintended consequence of disconnecting the citizens of America from a key part of their military.

The Adjutants General, with a common voice, have stated they support maintaining a minimum of one unit equipped flying wing in each state. This is not for political maneuvering. It goes to the ideology of the militia nation concept of defense that has its foundation in the United States Constitution. As you know the organized militias created by the Constitution were not intended or designed to be the most efficient and accessible military organization possible. They were, in fact, created as a political construct designed to keep checks and balances in place for the use of the United States military. Our forefathers envisioned a standing military that would be at the immediate call of the President, but they carefully placed much of the military force in each of the states. The design was crafted specifically to avoid creating a presidency that could conduct foreign policy with the powers of a King backed by a King's Military. The organized militias set forth in the Constitution, today's Army and Air National Guard, were to be organized, trained, and equipped by the federal military. They were to be available to be called to duty as the nation needed. However, there were put in place congressional checks and balances for the call up and use of that force. For centuries, this has served to ensure that the citizens of the nation remain connected to, and remain responsible for their own defense. The use of the United States military for large scale operations, by design, requires the consent of the Congress. This concept also ensures that the military is only used for long term conflict when supported by the people. The one significant time that this process was avoided was during the Vietnam War when the large standing force in place for the Cold War made it possible to fight in Vietnam without calling up the Guard and Reserves. As we know, immediately after the end of that war, the Total Force Policy was developed to ensure that the Guard and Reserve would have to be a part of any future sustained conflict. In the opinion of some in the DoD, the result of that policy is creating complications in today's environment. Others would state that the system is working in that Americans are fully connected to foreign operations because of required mobilization of the National Guard. The fact that this is causing informed questions to be asked throughout America is a good, and not a bad result of Total Force dependencies. The Adjutants General believe that it is a mistake to dismantle the militia nation concept as it relates to the USAF in order to address a short term anomaly in America's history.

One of the goals of the Air Force in this BRAC recommendation is to make the aircraft and aircrews currently serving in the Air National Guard more accessible for federal use. BRAC would accomplish this by closing many unit equipped Air National Guard Wings and redefining the militia concept by integrating Air National Guard units with and occasionally into active duty wings. From a DoD perspective, this would reduce the requirement to mobilize the Air National Guard and minimize the need to go to Congress

to ask for permission to use more of the force. Unfortunately, it would also dismantle many of the safeguards created by the Total Force policy. This restructuring would help solve short term problems, but it is the concern of the Adjutants General that it would have grave long term negative impacts.

When the USAF made the BRAC military value determination it weighted large centrally managed installations with high scores. This arrangement provides the most efficient way to bed down large concentration of forces, but by default, it offers very little scoring to the small and efficient Air National Guard wings. The USAF was looking at the issue through the eyes of leaders responsible to the President for the instant projection of air power. There was no allowance made in their calculations for the value of Air National Guard community basing. It is our contention that keeping Air National Guard unit equipped flying wings distributed in every state will ensure that Americans throughout the nation stay in tune with their Air Force. They will learn about their Air Force and the missions it is performing from citizen airmen who serve on school boards with them and who work and live alongside them as permanent members of their communities. Those informed citizens will lend their voices of support to the military because they will understand the issues as their neighbors, the citizen Airmen, deploy around the world and fight in America's wars.

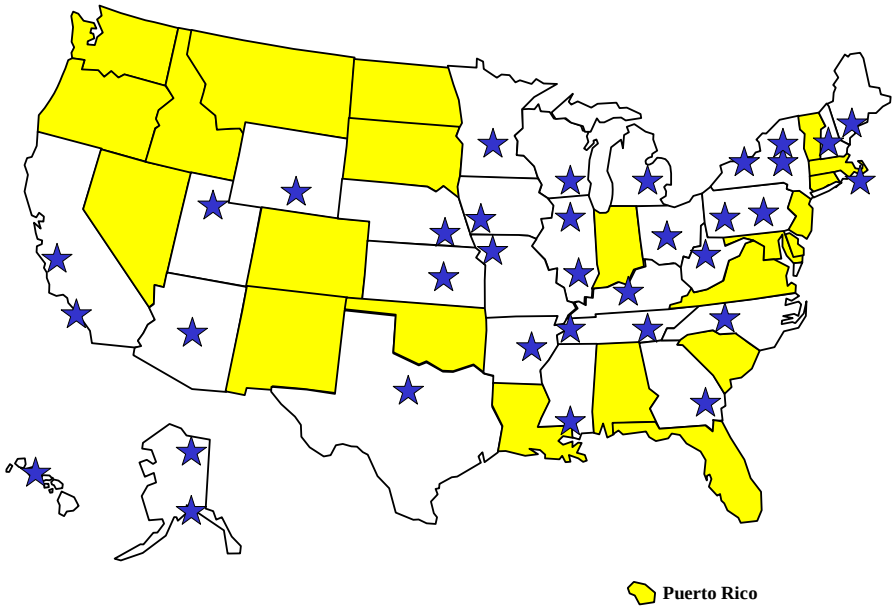
If those same citizens begin to hear things that cause them to lose support for the overseas mission, our elected members of Congress will begin to receive feedback and will hear the collective voices of America. It will result in democracy in action at a much earlier point in a conflict, and a repeat of Vietnam will be avoided. This was the intent of the militia nation construct… to keep citizens involved in their own defense rather than to develop a large standing professional military. BRAC should not be allowed to fundamentally change the way America defends herself because of USAF basing decisions.

With today's lethal weapons and with the speed that Airpower can be projected very quickly around the world, it might be time to consider a change to the militia nation concept of defense for the USAF. On the other hand, it might also be a time to make sure that America is behind the use of that incredible power before the country commits to wielding it. In either case, any fundamental change in how the country defends herself should be debated in Congress by the elected representatives of the people and not accomplished as a byproduct of BRAC basing decisions. We request that you look at the military value calculations and recommend that you place a high value on the positives of keeping at least one unit equipped flying wing in each state. For the purpose of today's hearings, that would affect both Montana and Washington, but we believe this to be a nationwide issue and the most important one that I am addressing today.

The second point I would like to address with you is the impact of the Air Force recommendations in BRAC on the Governor's ability to respond to Homeland Security requirements and natural disasters. Since September 11, 2001, many National Guard capabilities have been developed in order to support civil authorities in time of crisis. Those assets require air transportation in many instances. The impact of removing unit

equipped KC-135s from the Washington Air National Guard and of C-130 aircraft from the Idaho Air National Guard will totally delete the Northwest Governors' emergency capability to respond to Homeland Security events within the region. They will also lose a capability to rapidly support other governors throughout the United States through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Slide 3 shows the proposed post BRAC distribution of Air National Guard unit assigned airlift aircraft around the nation.

Post BRAC - Stars indicate ANG Air Mobility Wings



Yellow - States with no emergency airlift avail to Governor

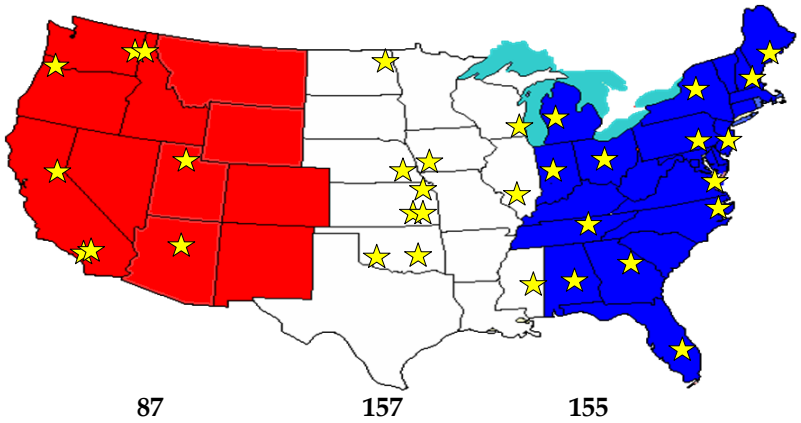
Slide 3

By design, unit assigned National Guard federal equipment; to include airlift aircraft is available to a governor for emergency use. Of course federal need always tops any state use, and the state must pay for any use it makes of the equipment. Thus, the system is designed so that there is no degradation of federal utilization, but the states benefit from the inherent capability of using the aircraft during times of emergency. During disasters, natural or human caused, this provides a tremendous emergency capability for the governors to use in their roles as the Chief Executive of the various states. Although it is not a reason for the USAF to base their aircraft in a specific state, the impact of moves involving airlift capability should be considered when arbitrary basing decisions are being made. As you can see, in Slide 3, the proposed BRAC moves will leave the governors of the entire Northwest Region without any emergency airlift capability. If the unit equipped KC-135s in the Washington Air National Guard were to be left in place, and if the C-130s were to remain in Idaho, the picture would look completely different. We request this be considered in your deliberations.

My third point for you today is to request a reconsideration of the KC-135 basing recommendations as it applies to Fairchild Air Force Base and the entire Northwest. As you know, the air refueling capability of the USAF sets this country apart with a Global Reach capability not approached by any other nation. This capability is what allows all

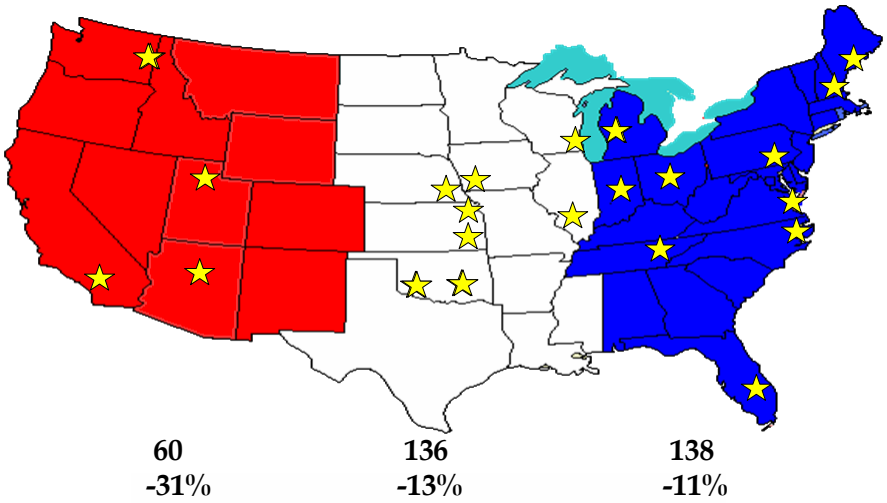
other aircraft to be so effective. It allows C-17s to fly non stop to anywhere in the world. It allows us to deploy fighters, bombers, and surveillance aircraft to locations not reachable in any other fashion, and it allows the United States Navy and Marines to operate their aircraft from extended distances. Slides 4 and 5 illustrate the migration of air refueling capability away from the west coast if this BRAC proposal is adopted. As you can see the number of KC-135 unit equipped wings in the western third of the US decreases markedly.

Pre-BRAC KC-135 Distribution



Slide 4

Post-BRAC KC-135 Redistribution



Slide 5

From a military value perspective it is our concern that it is not in the best interest of the United States of America to move these KC-135 force multiplying aircraft away from the west coast. The next illustration demonstrates the impact of flying air refueling missions from McConnell AFB, KS, the other large tanker base, instead of from Fairchild AFB, WA, when going into the Pacific Area of Responsibility.

Strategic Significance

1,025 Fewer Nautical Miles To Fly Means
Greater Capability For Pacific Missions

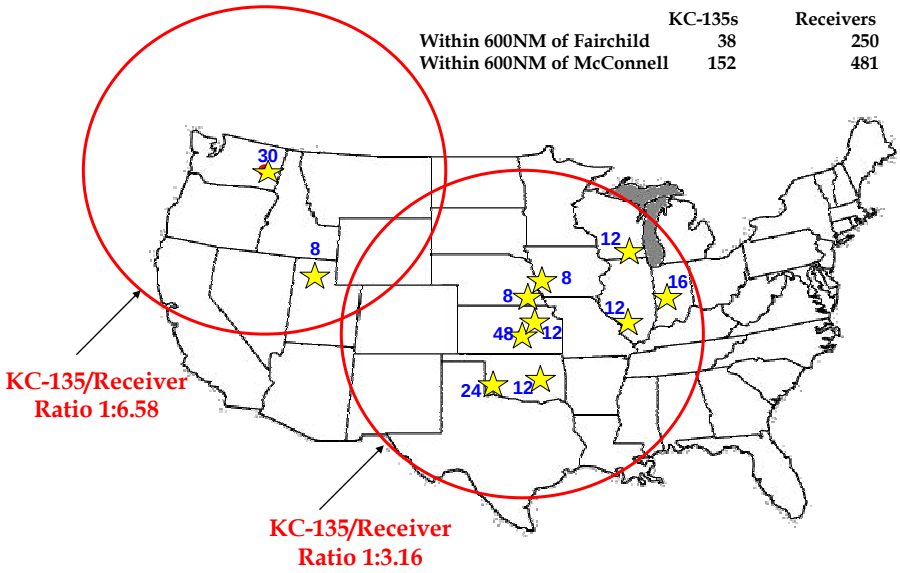
-Each Fairchild KC-135 Has Approximately 28,000 Lbs More Fuel To Offload
-Enroute Times Are Approximately 2 Hours, 30 Minutes Shorter

Slide 6

Since much of the Strategic Airlift deploys from McChord AFB, WA and Travis AFB, CA, it would seem prudent to keep more Air Refueling capability in the Northwest. Another factor is the concentration of receivers that utilize the KC-135 aircraft for training on a regular basis. McConnell AFB, KS and Fairchild AFB, WA are slated to be the two large air refueling bases remaining after BRAC. Slide 7 shows the number of receivers and tankers based within the 600 mile overlapping rings of the two bases. Again, it appears the distribution proposed under the current plan does not adequately address training needs, Pacific deployments, and Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) responsibilities. Adding to this problem is the alert air refueling requirements in the Northwest. Currently, between the KC-135s based at Portland and Fairchild, there are four airplanes required to be on alert at all times. If this BRAC proposal is implemented, over thirteen percent of the aircraft assigned to Fairchild will be tied to an alert line on any given day. In fact, crews of the Washington Air National Guard are providing two of the unit assigned alert aircraft and three of the crews for the alert lines at the current time. Loss of these aircraft would place an even larger burden on the already overstressed active duty fleet at Fairchild AFB. It is apparent that this information was not taken into consideration when the BRAC recommendations were made. With a force of only thirty aircraft, it would be very difficult to provide four airplanes for alert while covering the Pacific deployment and receiver training responsibilities, and still providing aircraft for the Air Expeditionary Force. It is requested that the Commission examine data from the

USAF as to how the requirements can be met. Three of these alert aircraft are tied to Homeland Defense. All of these missions are being done with ANG and Air Force Reserve crews and planes. With those assets scheduled to leave, it is essential to ensure this mission will not suffer under the USAF recommendation.

Fairchild and McConnell KC-135/Receiver Ratios: 600 NM



Slide 7

The USAF BRAC proposal indicates Fairchild will be the first base to accept the KC-X follow-on air refueling tanker. The BRAC proposal indicates a basing plan that would place ten of the new aircraft at Fairchild by 2011. This aircraft will undoubtedly provide new capabilities, however, a design has not even been submitted yet, and it is very much an unknown as to when the aircraft will actually be available for basing. It is our contention it would be unwise to remove aircraft from Fairchild AFB, WA in the beginning stages of BRAC prior to the actual fielding of a new aircraft. If the aircraft is fielded at a later date and it offers new flexibility the reassignment could then be made. In our opinion, it would be detrimental for both cost and efficiency reasons to diminish the Fairchild AFB, WA capacity at this time.

Such a move would serve only to further skew the imbalance. It is our recommendation that the commission direct the eight unit equipped KC-135s assigned to the Washington Air National Guard be left in place until there is a production delivery and fielding plan for the follow-on aircraft is in place. Fairchild AFB has a capability to accommodate up to eighty-seven KC-135s, and the eight suggested to be left in place aircraft are currently stationed there and fully operational. The unit is fully combat capable and is contributing at full rate to the nation's defense. There would be no cost to this proposal. As this Slide 8 shows, the trend at Fairchild is going in the opposite way than is prudent.

Fairchild Will Lose nearly 50% Of Its Primary Assigned KC-135s

FY	Active Duty	ANG
2003	48	10
2004	36	8
2005	30	8
2006	30	8
2007	30	0
⋮		
2011	*30 +?? KC-X*	*0*

Slide 8

We recommend the Commission overturn the USAF BRAC recommendation and direct the eight WA ANG unit-equipped KC-135s be left at the 141 Air Refueling Wing, Fairchild AFB, WA. This course of action would solve all three of the issues discussed to this point. Directing this action would keep the citizen Airman connection with the American people.

This positive course of action would provide an emergency airlift capability to the governors of the Northwest Region for use in Homeland Security events. While not detracting from their federal use, this would make aircraft available for Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) missions.

Finally, this solution reduces the basing imbalance of KC-135s by leaving eight additional aircraft in the Pacific region. This provides a much better capability to accomplish real world Pacific missions, receiver and tanker training needs, and projected alert requirements.

My final input to you today concerns the proposed BRAC change that would remove the F-15 air defense fighter aircraft based at from Portland IAP. It is our understanding that the BRAC plan to provide for the Air Defense for the Northwest duel tasks the F-15 training unit at Kingsley Field, OR. As a career fighter pilot who has also been the commander of an Air National Guard Fighter Training unit, I have concerns regarding the viability of this plan.

Numerous currency issues are involved with professionally performing the Air Sovereignty Alert Mission, and it is imperative that all certification issues for crews and aircraft be studied prior to making the assessment that this mission could be done as an

additional tasking. The aircraft and the pilots of a training squadron are certainly capable of performing the mission, but I would suggest that the required aircraft checks and the pilot currencies required for the Air Sovereignty mission will detract from the ability to still provide the training mission.

From the standpoint of the Governor of Washington and our other elected officials, the question we ask the BRAC Commission to consider is whether or not the removal of the Portland F-15s would have a negative impact on response times for the many critical infrastructure sites in Washington. When this question is asked of the Northern Command, we would suggest that the answer should specifically address the ability of the system to rapidly ramp up to the highest response posture level that would be required when an unexpected crisis such as September 11th occurs.

This concludes my remarks. I would like to answer any questions that you may have.

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor

DCN: 3375

STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

June 6, 2005

Members, 2005 Defense Base Realignment
and Closure Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your dedicated service on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), and for this opportunity to provide input on behalf of the citizens of the state of Washington. I have carefully reviewed the recommendations of the Secretary of Defense for this round of proposed base realignment and generally support the Secretary's overall recommendations. I do, however, have two serious concerns about the impact these proposals will have upon our Air National Guard and our national defense.

The first concern has to do with the removal of unit-equipped KC-135 aircraft from Washington's 141st Air Refueling Wing at Fairchild Air Force Base and the proposed elimination of unit-equipped aircraft from other Air National Guard units in a significant number of other states and territories. Such actions would substantially diminish our capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks and other catastrophic domestic emergencies. Removing the unit-equipped KC-135 aircraft would eliminate my ability to employ them – at state expense – to move quick reaction forces for the protection of citizens and critical infrastructure or to rapidly transport personnel and supplies to where they are most needed during a man-made or natural disaster.

My second concern is the Air Force's plan to dramatically reduce primary assigned air defense fighter aircraft in the Pacific Northwest. Specifically, it would remove permanently stationed air sovereignty alert fighter aircraft at Portland International Airport and sixteen KC-135R Air Refueling aircraft from Fairchild AFB and Portland. If enacted, these actions would substantially diminish the air defense of the state of Washington and all surrounding states vis-à-vis the capabilities that existed on September 11, 2001. At that time, 15 permanently assigned air sovereignty F-15s were stationed at Portland and 58 permanently assigned KC-135R refueling aircraft were stationed at Fairchild AFB. Nearly all of these aircraft were brought to an immediate response posture to protect Washington and the other Northwest states during this national emergency. As you are aware, the 9-11 Commission investigation found that terrorists had planned as many as ten aerial attack missions that day, including several West Coast targets. During this national emergency, the permanently assigned fighter interceptor and air refueling aircraft currently on the cutting board provided airborne protection to Washington's nuclear

DCN: 3375

facilities, dams, cities, ports, and other critical facilities in a very short period of time. If the Air Force's BRAC recommendations are approved, our protection from air assault would be less than half of what it was when we were attacked on September 11th. It certainly would degrade our state's ability to surge to a higher state of alert and to sustain air sovereignty operations for the duration of an elevated threat period.

I appreciate your careful consideration of the issues raised in this letter. These concerns also have been expressed by members of our congressional delegation and others who have submitted formal input for the record, and by our Adjutant General Timothy Lowenberg. They also will be reiterated by Major General Frank Scoggins in his oral and written testimony to the Commission at its regional hearing on June 17.

The people of Washington are justifiably proud of our state's role in contributing to the national defense and acknowledge our shared role in effecting homeland security. Our State is uniquely qualified for this task. Washington's diverse geography makes it ideally suited for the advanced training and basing of our nation's military services. Our location makes us an essential power project projection platform from which to assure America's influence throughout the world, especially throughout the Pacific Rim. We have a vibrant economic infrastructure, a highly educated work force, and patriotic state and community leaders dedicated to ensuring the success of our country's military missions, now and well into the next century. As one indication of local support for our Armed Forces, the Washington State Legislature has adopted land use laws and other legislation designed to assure strong support for our military installations and for the military members, civilian employees, and dependents who live, work, and raise their families in our state. We stand ready to do even more.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and for your selfless service in undertaking the responsibility you bear as a member of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

DCN: 3375

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 15, 2005

Anthony Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

First, allow us to thank you for your work on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The task before you and the commission is an important and arduous one. Your willingness to serve our nation in this capacity is appreciated.

We believe that the Defense Secretary's recommendations largely recognize the important military assets we have in the Northwest. The combination of our distinctive geography, unique military assets and dedicated servicemen and servicewomen, position the Pacific Northwest well in the critical protection of our homeland.

However, we are concerned about the proposed realignment of important Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve assets away from the Pacific Northwest. The Department of Defense has recommended the realignment of all 15 F-15 fighters of the 142nd Air National Guard (ANG) fighter wing based at Portland International Airport (PDX). Additionally, the Pentagon has recommend the realignment of 8 tankers of the 939th Air Force Reserve refueling wing based at PDX and all eight of the tankers assigned to the 141st ANG wing at Fairchild Air Force Base.

These realignments overlook the critical role these air assets play in ensuring the security of the Pacific Northwest and our nation. For more than three days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the fighters of the 142nd ANG wing provided 24-hour air patrols over population centers, major military bases, and other high value targets across a three state region. The patrols helped protect our citizens and provided invaluable security in the very uncertain hours after the terrorist attacks on our nation. The nation continues to require a comparable level of responsiveness to counter potential threats to its Northwest region.

If implemented, the Secretary's recommendations would greatly limit this homeland security capability for our nation. While the Secretary's recommendations would maintain the alert component at PDX through the rotation of fighters from distant bases -- no fighters would be permanently based in Portland. In the midst of another attack on our homeland, fighters would have to be quickly scrambled from more distant bases, possibly

compromising the security of major population centers and other high value targets along America's west coast.

We also are concerned about the proposed realignment of eight ANG air refueling tankers assigned to the 141st ANG wing at Fairchild Air Force Base and eight additional tankers assigned to the 939th Air Force Reserve Wing at PDX. Air refueling tankers are vital assets in the rapid projection of forces around the world and have played critical roles in past and present military operations. If implemented, the number of active duty, guard, and reserve air refueling tankers in the Northwest will have been reduced by more than 50 percent since the terrorist attacks of September 11th. These reductions will strain force projection capabilities, limit Air National Guard training capacity, increase the average time to run sorties throughout the Pacific Rim, and will reduce available air refueling capabilities.

In addition to compromising our Homeland Security, the proposed realignments would reduce the important connectivity of the Air National Guard to the citizens and communities of each state. Currently, each of the 50 States have a unit equipped Air National Guard Wing within their borders. Implementing the Department of Defense's proposed plan would leave seven states, including three western states, without a unit equipped ANG flying unit. Enactment of this plan would have the unintended consequences of reducing the historic and philosophical connectivity of the National Guard to the citizens of affected States and would also reduce the emergency response capabilities currently available to Governors.

With these issues in mind, we respectfully request that you carefully examine the realignment of these air assets, in light of their recent critical role in meeting emerging security requirements. Like the Commission, we want to ensure that our nation is well positioned to protect itself from threats, both foreign and domestic. Our military assets in the Northwest remain well positioned to protect the homeland and to help ensure the national security of the United States. We hope to work with you to implement the current base realignment and closure round to ensure the improved security of our great nation.

Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Norm Dicks
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Al
Member of Congress

Dave Reichert
Member of Congress

Brian Baird
Member of Congress

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress

Jay Inslee
Member of Congress