

July 26, 2005

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

BRAC Commission

JUL 29 2005

Re: **Relocate the Defense Language Institute**

Received

Dear Commissioners,

I am the proud spouse of an Army soldier with over 20 years of military service. I feel VERY strongly that both the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) should be moved from the high cost area of Monterey. Since my spouse is stationed at DLI, I will focus my comments specifically with regard to that facility.

There are four main problems with keeping this fine institution in Monterey:

**1. Waste of taxpayer money:** It is costing the U.S. government an enormous amount to keep this institution in Monterey. One example is the outrageous amount of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) paid by the various military services to keep families in this prime real estate area. Expensive utilities are another example. The government pays a great deal to transport soldiers, families, and household goods to this area because it is located in the extreme western portion of the country. A language school that is based in a central location of the country (near a large existing post) would provide substantial savings. Being relocated to or near an existing post would mean that functions such as finance, transportation, health care, dental, etc. would not have to be duplicated. Before the closure of Fort Ord in the previous BRAC round, DLI and NPS enjoyed the support afforded by a division-size military post.

**2. Inability to grow and expand:** The war on terrorism will continue beyond our lifetime. The need for professional language training will steadily grow as our military adapts to new threats and scenarios. The ability to expand in this location would be piecemeal at best. Water is in short supply and real estate for additional classroom space and barracks/family housing is limited. To have the city lease the military a variety of buildings spread across the city is a very expensive option and presents a security nightmare.

**3. The economic impact to military families stationed in this area:** This is the most expensive place (gas, food, basic necessities, etc.) that we have ever been stationed. We receive zero Cost of Living Allowance at this location and it hits our family budget quite hard. For example, even though we can buy gas on-post for 3 or 4 cents per gallon cheaper than off-post, gas prices in our area are much higher than other parts of the country. The permanent party soldiers stationed at DLI have no hope of purchasing a home in this real estate market. Even the smallest, most dilapidated housing is over \$500,000. At cheaper locations across the country, these same soldiers could purchase a home and build 3 to 5 years worth of equity. While in

though this is an absolutely gorgeous place to be stationed and we love it, but one cannot deny the financial strain of living in one of the most expensive zip codes in the nation.

**4. Lack of support from the local community:** The Monterey community likes having the military stationed here because of the dollars it brings to the area. However, there is a huge lack of support for the soldiers themselves. Every weekend there is an Iraqi war protest in Monterey, complete with multiple American flags being flown upside down. This protest also includes President Bush being likened to Adolf Hitler and our soldiers being portrayed as murderers. Soldiers are routinely "booed" while running through town during PT (physical training). A lot of the very young soldiers stationed at DLI will be deployed to Iraq once their language training is finished. Is this really the impression of "soldier support" that we want them heading to Iraq with? When DLI recently leased an empty elementary school building for additional classroom space, the local residents staged a huge protest to try to keep the military out of their neighborhood. I would like to see DLI located in an area of the country where the local residents enthusiastically support the soldiers and their families.

I have heard the doomsday scenarios of not being able to get the teachers to follow the language school if it were transferred. I disagree. It might be surprising how many teachers might actually leave such a high cost area so that their dollars will go further and they can actually enter a sane real estate market. Monterey will bounce back very quickly from losing a military presence because of tourism and the high demand of real estate in this area. There will be no shortage of people coming in to fill the facilities and housing left by the military.

The initial expense of moving DLI would be comparatively low since there are no heavy machines or military vehicles to move. Also, the new facilities would not have to be highly specialized or expensive. Construction of new classroom space and language labs would be the bulk of the transfer expense, which could easily be offset by the sale of the military's present real estate in Monterey.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read my comments. I wish the BRAC commission the very best with the tough task set before it.

Kindest Regards,

A very proud Army spouse