

2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

AFTERNOON SESSION

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2005

1:30 PM

106 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SUBJECT: EAST COAST MASTER JET BASE/NAVAL

AIR STATION OCEANA

COMMISSIONERS PRESIDING:

ANTHONY PRINCIPI, CHAIRMAN;

JAMES BILBRAY;

PHILIP COYLE;

ADMIRIAL HAROLD GEHMAN, U.S. NAVY (RET.);

JAMES HANSEN;

GENERAL JAMES HILL, U.S. ARMY (RET.);

GENERAL LLOYD NEWTON, U.S. AIR FORCE (RET.);

BRIGADIER GENERAL SUE TURNER, U.S. AIR FORCE (RET.);

SAMUEL SKINNER

CHAired BY:

ANTHONY PRINCIPI

WITNESSES:

GOVERNOR JEB BUSH (R-FL);

CAPTAIN JOHN LEENHOUTS, UNITED STATES NAVY (RET.);

JOHN CRAIG, FORMER F-18 HORNET PILOT;

ADMIRAL STAN ARTHUR, UNITED STATES NAVY (RET.);

ADMIRAL ROBERT NATTER, UNITED STATES NAVY (RET.);

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA MAYOR JOHN PEYTON (R)

SENATOR BILL NELSON (D-FL);

SENATOR MEL MARTINEZ (R-FL);

REPRESENTATIVE ANDER CRENSHAW (R-FL);

REPRESENTATIVE CLIFF STEARNS (R-FL);

GOVERNOR MARK WARNER (D-VA);

STEVE MONDUL, DIRECTOR OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES,

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION;

VIRGINIA BEACH MAYOR MEYERA OBERNDORF (D);

DELEGATE TERRY SUIT (R-VA);

REPRESENTATIVE THELMA DRAKE (R-VA);

DCN 11517

CAPTAIN GRANFIELD, UNITED STATES NAVY (RET.);

SENATOR GEORGE ALLEN (R-VA)

CERTIFIED

MR. PRINCIPI: (In progress) -- hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. This afternoon the commission will hear sworn testimony that will assist us in reaching a decision on an East Coast master jet base for the Navy. The commission is mandated to consider whether the Department of Defense substantially deviated from the statutory BRAC selection criteria and the force structure plan in failing to recommend closure or realignment of an installation.

On July 19, 2005, the commission voted in accordance with the process established by law to consider whether failure to recommend closure of NAS Oceana and move East Coast naval aviation to another base constitutes such a substantial deviation.

There are eight statutory selection criteria. However, the DOD and this commission are required to give the most weight to the four criteria measuring military value.

There are few military values higher than the safety and proficiency of the men and women who accept the responsibilities and the risks of service in our armed forces. Naval aviators landing high performance aircraft on a carrier deck should be able to practice that maneuver realistically before they face the unforgiving environment of a career at sea. If conditions at a

naval air station compromise the quality of training operations, then continued operation at that base compromises military values. Testimony in prior commission hearings confirms the existence of serious encroachment issues compromising the military value of training and operations at NAS Oceana. These issues are of critical importance in assessing the impact of this BRAC round on operational readiness and training.

However, I must make it very clear that the commission, collectively and individually, has not reached a decision. The commission's goal is to ensure our Navy provides Atlantic Fleet naval aviators with a location and condition for training, whether at NAS Oceana or at another location like those they will face when they fly and fight while deployed.

The commission must explore every possible option to ensure the best possible opportunities and environment for naval aviation operations and training, and sometimes compromises can be mitigated. This hearing will contribute to the commission's assessment of the options and costs of moving the installation or leaving it as is and trying to mitigate the problems.

We are directed to the maximum extent feasible to base our decisions on certified data and sworn testimony. Today we will hear sworn testimony from Governor Bush and representatives of the Florida delegation, as well as the Virginia delegation, later this afternoon, on possible alternatives that we should explore. That

testimony will become a part of the body of evidence considered by the commission on August 24. Our deliberations and decisions on that day will be based on force structure and military value and other selection criteria. No other factors will be considered.

At this time, I ask our witnesses to stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment Statute. The oath will be administered by Rumu Sarkar, the commission's designated federal officer.

MS. SARKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(The witnesses were sworn.)

MS. SARKAR: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you. Well, again, welcome, Governor and members of the delegation. We have allotted one hour for this, your testimony. I'd very much appreciate it if you could adhere to that time limit, as we need to get on with other business. Thank you.

You may proceed, sir.

GOV. BUSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we will try to also make sure that there's 20 minutes of questions and answers time as well. We appreciate the chance to make our presentation about Cecil Field. We believe the case for Cecil Field is a compelling one, both from the business perspective, as well as from the military value perspective.

I also appreciate the fact that you all are committed patriots. You volunteered somehow for being on the BRAC commission. I appreciate that a lot. It's a lot of hard work, and I appreciate the fact that this process, which is intended to take politics out of a very difficult decision-making process is the right one for our country, and I appreciate your service to our country.

With respect to the business case, I want to make five very quick points. One, the state of Florida and the city of Jacksonville's prepared to provide a clear base. That would be a base of clean title, to the Department of Defense, 17,668 acres with all the capital improvements. There have been \$133 million of additional capital improvements since 1999 when Cecil Field was closed.

The property, as valued by the city of Jacksonville, is \$1.66 billion. In addition to that, the state and the city is prepared to spend up to \$200 million to cancel all of the leases and relocate every lease that is on the base and, in the interim, the Navy would have the opportunity to do all of its construction in preparation of reopening Cecil Field.

Secondly, we are accelerating a \$130 million road project that would connect the front gate of Cecil Field directly to I-10 to the north. That is already in our work plan, and it'll be accelerated to be completed by 2009.

Third, the Florida Housing Corporation is committed to, and has already allocated, \$500 million in tax-exempt mortgage revenue bond proceeds for low-interest mortgage loans for affordable rental housing to support Cecil Field, and I intend to seek \$100 million of support in a special session this fall for additional incentives so as to assure that there is a robust public-private venture for housing, should Cecil Field be reopened.

Fourth, encroachment protection is something that the mayor and I have been working on long before the BRAC process -- and you'll have a discussion about that -- but we have a long history of protecting of our natural environment. The largest land purchasing programs in the United States are in Florida. Three hundred million dollars a year over the last 15 years have been allocated for this.

We have committed to making sure that the properties inside the areas, the noise buffer areas, will continue to be part of our strategic approach to purchase these environmentally sensitive lands.

In addition to that, we will prioritize these spendings. They're already in our prioritized ecosystem strategy of purchases, and we will continue to make sure that those purchases occur on a timely basis, as they have in the past.

And then finally, we are confident that we can meet the deadline that you would impose on us. We believe that we could

get this done within the six-year time frame required by the BRAC process.

I am now pleased to introduce to you Captain John Leenhouts, who is United States retired pilot, to continue our presentation.

CAPT. LEENHOUTS: Thank you very much, Governor. Commissioners, if you would please allow me to stand, and I'll give a presentation from the charted area over there.

First of all, it's very important for you all to understand who I am so that my credibility will be established. I know who you are, and so it's clear in your minds, I'm a retired 27-year veteran of the United States Navy. I was a commodore of the strike fighter wing for the last three and a half years that I was in the Navy. I have flown over 6,000 tactical jet hours, encompassing A-7 Corsairs, F-14 Tomcats, and lastly the F/A-18 Hornet. Of those, about 100 hours were flown in combat in Desert Storm. Additionally, I have extensive carrier landing experience and hold the record today for the most carrier landings in the history of the United States, with over 1,645 off of 16 different carriers.

So with that as my background, what I would like to impart to you is my perspective as a naval aviator in looking at what it's like to fly out of Oceana, which I did for over four years, and have flown out of there since 1975, and in the last two years of my Navy career, I did fly out of there exclusively.

If you'll look to my left, this chart on my left indicates a city map, Rand McNally, of Virginia Beach. Imbedded within that great population, the largest city in Virginia, is NAS Oceana. If you look to my right, you will see that Jacksonville, Florida, is set close to the coast as well, but to the west of it, in the wide open spaces, is what used to be Naval Air Station Cecil, now Cecil Field Commerce Center, as well as Outlying Field Whitehouse.

The circles that you are looking at indicate the five-mile range of the typical air traffic control zone in which airplanes operate in. Around those air fields, as we well know in Oceana, is an extensive amount of encroachment. The charts in front of me here, numbers three and four, will show you the difference -- not in the AICUZ -- because the AICUZ, as important as it is, which is the noise zone we equate to the 65-decibel level range, that at Oceana we have in excess of 145,000 people living in that, the real crutch (sic) of the matter is the accident potential zones.

At Cecil Field right now you have less than 10,000 people in the AICUZ 65-dB line, but when you get to the accident potential zones, you've got over 3,600 people living where the airplanes fly and operate right around NAS Oceana. At Cecil Field, you have zero. No one lives in the accident potential zones. No one. Additionally, in the APZs, you have schools and churches and commercial buildings around NAS Oceana. There are none of those in the APZs around NAS -- what would have been NAS Cecil Field.

Those combined create problems. The combination of ground encroachment, right up to the fence line, and you double that with the encroachment of air space, which over NAS Oceana is extensive and causes us great challenges. So the two of those place hindrances on our ability to do our mission.

Let me talk specifically right now about the potential, as we've already discussed, for encroachment around Cecil Field. We saw that there has been extensive encroachment on Oceana, but at Cecil, if you'll look to the right, to chart number seven, you will see that the green, the dark green area, is land that is currently owned by the government. That encompasses -- the base itself is over 17,000 acres, compared to 5,000 at NAS Oceana. Couple with that -- and you can see the black line which indicates where the AICUZ line of 65 decibel levels is, you'll see the light green area. That land has been offered up for potential purchase by the government to ensure that there will be no encroachment.

And the reality is, to the west side and the north and south of Cecil is what we could term a greenbelt. It's preserved land that can never be encroached upon, and the city and the state are actively engaged in acquiring even more of that land to ensure there will be no replication of what we have had to endure at NAS Oceana.

Well, once you take those two combined, both the ground clutter and the airborne traffic that precludes rapid launching

out of Oceana, you end up with what we term right now a very congested area, on the ground and the air. Getting airborne out of Oceana, numerous times -- yes sir, that's right; we had to taxi out, hold short, wait for launch, unable to make it, turn around because our target time was unable to be met, and taxi back. If you do get airborne, then you have restrictive flight paths that limits you to 4,000 feet for 15 to 20 miles, then you're allowed to climb. Not the same at Cecil Field, and why is that? Because the airspace is not congested, and you can climb rapidly to your fuel efficient altitudes of 15 (thousand) to 20,000 and go directly to your target areas.

Now, let's talk about those target areas. You can look to my left, you'll see chart number six right here. This is a comparison between Virginia Beach operating area and the Jacksonville operating area. If you'll look to the bottommost, you'll see that you have one tactical range out there. There's a TACs range for recreation of tactical maneuvering, but you also have the massive air warning area that gives you 112,000 square miles. That's excellent airspace, but you have to share that with the Air Force out of Langley. You also only have two targets; you have their target, and you have BTs-9/11. Those, coupled with two MOAs, limit the ability you have to go train every day.

You compare that directly to what happens in Florida when you have two major tactical ranges which encompass over 220,000 square

miles of uninterrupted airspace, from the surface to 43,000 feet. And we can actually work those areas any time we want, because they're so massive. And yes, they do allow us to do joint work with the Air Force, as well as the Guard units that are located over at Eglin and at Jacksonville International.

Additionally to that, there are six different MOAs -- military operating areas -- associated within a single-cycle sortie of the aircraft, giving yourselves an hour and 15 cycle, or an hour and 30, you can fly to all those ranges. You could fly to the targets, which are six different targets in four different target complexes. There's live target ranges; two of them, both at Eglin and at Pinecastle, with the additional one going in live in January of '06 at Avon Park -- all of them within a single cycle of the Hornet. Those afford us the opportunity to fly anywhere you want, any day, and actually target over 100 different tactical aim points and live targets, and electronic warfare range, and the tactical range, and the ability to do tactical training with our sister services in the Air Force and the Army and the Marine Corps, out of Buford and out of Fort Stewart. And we did this regularly, both day and night.

Now, if you're going to be able to exploit the capability of naval aviation and train to fight, you've got to do it in the most unusual and demanding world you ever imagined, when you have to do this at an aircraft carrier at sea. So no matter how good my

training is in the air in putting a bomb on a target or fighting an airborne threat, I have to be able to come back and land on board the aircraft carrier. The most volatile skill of a naval aviator is his ability to constantly land, consistently, every time, in the pitching deck, nighttime environment, on an aircraft carrier, and the only way you're going to get there and ensure that success, that you can actually land every time you come from -- approach that ship, is you have to practice, practice, practice, practice.

What do you have at NAS Oceana? We have Fentress Field that, due to the encroachment, has caused the pattern to be flown in a dogleg fashion at altitudes of 200 feet higher than you normally would. What does that cause? That causes excessive rates of descent off the approach pattern from the 180-degree position, if you come in to land. So that rate of descent now becomes locked into your brain, and when you go out to the ship, and when you're under stress, you revert back to what you've been trained to do, and unfortunately, that causes problems for the young aviators.

Does it cause a problem for the exceptionally experienced aviator? Absolutely not. I tell you, I personally could go to train out at Fentress and do just fine. But I have over 1,600 carrier landings. The guy I'm worried about is that young man or that young woman who's got less than 100 traps -- 200 or 300 -- and they have to repeat their training every time to make it work.

If you try to do that at NAS Oceana, you can't do it. Those altitudes are 400 feet higher at the abeam position and have excessive rates of descent to get to the start point. And we say in the landing signal officer world, you have to get a good start when you start at the 180. If you can't do that, you'll never get aboard the ship every time.

Conversely, at Naval Outlying Field Whitehouse -- totally wide open; same pattern at the ship, 800 feet into the break, 600 feet on the downwind, 450 feet going through the 90, 375 through the 45, and you roll into the groove, and you can fly that past the same way every day, day and night, the same way you will do it at the ship. Repetition, repetition, repetition. At Navy -- what used to be Navy Cecil, now Cecil Field -- you have the ability to do the same identical pattern. Not only can you do that same pattern every day and at night, but you can do it concurrently with operations going on on the adjacent runway. And we did this regularly, all through the '80s and '90s, where you would do touch-and-go field carrier landing practice, right there with the exact patterns at Cecil Field, and concurrently having airplanes come in and doing full-stop landings on the adjacent runway.

Now, another one of the luxuries, if I say you have to practice like you're going to train, train like you're going to fight, then you have the ability at Whitehouse to do what we call the overhead marshalling stack, stacking them up to 6 (thousand),

8 (thousand), 10,000 feet overhead the field, circling down, simulating helicopter operations exactly like the ship, and then you come in and make your landings just like you would if you're at the ship and you're making your approach. That is not replicated at Fentress.

Additionally, when you go out to Cecil Field, we were able to put together what we called USS Ship Cecil Field, lining the airplanes up 15 miles behind the base, stacking at 5,000 feet all the way up to 15,000 feet, one minute apart push-out, replicating the carrier approach procedures all the way to touchdown. Every single time, that guy got to practice what he was going to see when he went to the ship, with no limitations. No limitations. All day, all night, and you didn't have to do -- you didn't have to do at Cecil the way they have to do it today at NAS Oceana. You can't do touch-and-gos after 10 o'clock in the evening, you can't do FCLPs -- field carrier landing practice -- unless they've filled up the pattern till 2:30 in the morning out at Fentress. Those are limitations that are very challenging.

So, in closing, what I'd like to make sure you walk away from, is the fact that we have in Florida, in essence, a Fallon training range, a myriad of targets in airspace with which to practice all of the strike warfare capabilities of naval aviation as it has to offer today; all the altitudes, no restrictions, because the FAA works closely in a real-time basis with us to

allow high-altitude weapons delivery. All of those training things that we do out at Fallon, we can do right there in Florida.

And then lastly, but most importantly, if you're going to be able to have strike power from the aircraft carrier, you have to get aboard. And we can practice just the way we're at the ship. The only difference between Outlying Field Whitehouse and Cecil Field is those two are not underway, but everything else is the same.

So when you consider all this, please remember that not only is this the ideal place to train, but it has the chance to give all those young men and women a chance to train like they're going to fight and fight to win. And if we want to think about savings, let's think about saving their lives when they go out and do their job.

With that, I would like to turn it over to another naval aviator, no longer in the service, Mr. John Craig.

MR. CRAIG: Good afternoon. My name is John Craig, and I appreciate your time. I recently left the Navy just two years ago as a commander with over 16 years of active service in order to care for my disabled son. My last job was the operations officer at Strike Fighter Weapons School Atlantic at NAS Oceana, where we were responsible for the training and combat readiness for all F-18 and F-14 squadrons as they prepared for deployment.

I'm a Naval Academy graduate with over 4,000 hours of flight time, including 2,000 hours operating from the NAS Oceana and NAS Cecil Field complexes. I have completed four combat deployments, have over 650 carrier landings.

I asked to participate today due to my ongoing concerns regarding the degraded training environment and the safety issues that exist at NAS Oceana as it exists today.

There is no doubt that combat readiness suffers due to the operations at Oceana and Outlying Field Fentress. Commercial and military flight restrictions; persistent instrument flight conditions, including severe icing in the winter time; and severely restricted arrival and departure procedures due to the encroachment, all increase the time, fuel and money needed to fulfill training requirements.

Additionally, that Dare County training complex in northern North Carolina is just simply inadequate for today's precision weapons delivery techniques. We need to practice in an environment that allows us to replicate exactly what we do on the battlefield, and there is no live bombing capability at Dare County.

As the officer in charge responsible for the strike fighter advanced readiness program, part of the interdeployment training cycle, I consistently was forced to compromise training objectives, waive individual flight events for pilots, and

eventually, squadrons were sent on deployment without completing the CNO-directed training.

Fentress continues to be a severe detriment to our training and, as Captain Leenhouts adhered to -- or talked about, the lack of the proper carrier environment simulation, especially at night, is a severe safety issue.

In contrast, we did not have to face those issues while flying at Cecil Field and Outlying Field Whitehouse. Airspace and flight patterns allowed us to train as we fight. The close proximity to both over-water ranges and superb inland bombing complexes at Pinecastle and Avon Park in central Florida gave tactical aviators all the tools they needed to be successful in combat.

Strike fighter advanced readiness program and that interdeployment training cycle portion never suffered when we were training out of Cecil Field. And, in fact, in the spring of 2002 while I was the operations officer at the weapons school, several senior leadership -- TAC Air leadership -- at Oceana explored the possibility of taking five squadrons back down to Cecil Field in order to make sure that we got the requisite combat training during that time. Unfortunately, money did not allow us to do that.

In conclusion, I've just come today to give you the perspective of the current fleet aviator. I know the issues

surrounding Cecil Field and at Oceana, and I know that we have an opportunity to secure premier training facilities at Cecil Field and allow our warriors today and in the future the ranges and the ability to train to the best of their ability so they can go and fight and win. I endorse that option completely, and I appreciate your time.

Now, it's my privilege to introduce one of my personal heroes, a man with over 500 combat missions in Southeast Asia, in Vietnam, Admiral Stan Arthur.

ADM. ARTHUR: It's a pleasure to be here today with you. I am Admiral Stan Arthur, Navy Retired. I spent 38 years on active duty as a naval aviator and spent most of my operational time aboard our wonderful carriers.

The issue of pilot training is a very important one to me. I know how critical it is for our young aviators to be able to train realistically before we ask them to risk their lives flying from the decks of our carriers.

When bad habits are allowed to grow, mistakes happen. Tiger Woods knows this; except for him, it results in a bogey. But in the carrier environment, it can often result in a fatality. I have seen this more often than I care to. When you are under stress, you must rely on your instincts to make the right choice. Instinct and habit patterns are honed through realistic, repetitive training. This is why I want our young aviators to

have the best training possible, so they can continue to contribute to our national security and live to a ripe old age.

Are they getting what they need? Let me read some statements from Oceana aviators as taken from a 13 September, 2004 article from "The Virginian-Pilot." I quote Lieutenant Commander Mark Sullivan, an F-14 pilot and veteran landing signal officer, referring to carrier landing practice at Outlying Field Fentress, "The difference in approach is dramatic. The whole neighborhood is off limits to us," pointing to a map of Fentress. "So we fly around this farm on this side; we stay outside the road here, cut back in on this side so we don't cross the Intracoastal, go all the way out here, and now drive over to get on line."

Captain Mark Mills, who commands Air Wing One at Oceana, said, "Flight patterns are a half-mile wider than those used at the carriers." Captain Tom Keeley, Oceana's commanding officer, "The Navy is out of alternatives. We are at the limit."

This article went on to say that Oceana pilots say they can see the advancing encroachment every time they return from an extended deployment. I would comment here that it is almost impossible to roll back encroachment.

In another article dated 30 June, 2004, the same Virginia newspaper reported on a five-page affidavit submitted by Admiral William J. Fallon, then U.S. Atlantic Fleet commander. When speaking about the operations at Outlying Field Fentress, "The

first time an aviator actually lands at sea on a dark night will be more difficult than it has to be if he had to do his night training at Fentress." In my mind, this is unacceptable risk when there is an alternative.

In summary, it boils down to whether this great nation, through you nine commissioners, is going to provide the best and safest training available to our young aviators. I am convinced it is available. You certainly have a tough job, but I believe the choice here is easy.

Thank you very much. And now, Admiral Bob Natter.

ADM. NATTER: Thank you, Admiral. I'm Bob Natter, a resident

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(Direction off mike.)

ADM. NATTER: Thank you. I'm a resident of the state of Florida. I'm also a consultant for the state on military issues. I'm proud to say that I had the great honor of serving for 41 years in the Navy. I'm even prouder still to be able to say I have three daughters in the Navy today, one of whom is a naval aviator.

I retired about a year and a half ago. My last three years in the Navy were as commander of the United States Atlantic Fleet based in Norfolk, Virginia. During my three-year tenure there, I worked very closely with the chief of naval operations, Vern Clark, on issues associated with Oceana and Fentress.

Additionally, I met with the commanding officers of Naval Air Station Oceana about the issues of noise abatement and training. I also met on two occasions with the air wing commanders out at Naval Air Station Oceana to talk about deployment training, readiness and the ability to attain those readiness levels around Oceana and Fentress.

As an example of the encroaching -- the encroachment problems around Oceana that was a problem for training, I have to note that the commanding officer of NAS Oceana wrote the city council of Virginia Beach on 70 occasions, offering his strong objections to specific building projects around Oceana. In 51 of those appeals, the city council voted to go ahead with the construction in spite of those objections.

The CNO and I looked at alternatives. Oceana is a very valuable air station. But we knew we needed relief from the ability to train around Oceana and around Fentress.

The result of that effort was to find a location for an additional outlying field. That location is currently in North Carolina. The Navy, with the support of the United States Congress, has appropriated \$180 million to build this additional outlying field if the courts don't block it. I believe that a \$180 million problem is not just an inconvenience, but a very serious problem.

Subsequently, the CNO testified before this very commission that -- and the vice chief testified just last month before this commission that the Navy had to look for an opportunity to build another master jet base 10 to 12 years from now.

The plan to build an additional outlying field to relieve the pressure and a determination if they wanted to invest another \$2 billion 10 years from now to help alleviate the training problems around Oceana, I think, are indicative.

Now, let me talk about Cecil Field. To me, the Navy's opposition to this is befuddling, primarily because they've never bothered to go down to Cecil Field to look at what's there. They strictly have said that there's an encroachment problem, an FAA problem and an investment problem.

The reality -- and the facts don't support that. Let's look at the numbers. Here's what one gets for the return of Naval Air Station Cecil Field to the Department of Defense: 17,600 acres, all government land -- federal government DOD land -- around the air strip, as opposed to 5,000-some acres around Oceana; all existing infrastructure there. There's actually more hangar space at Cecil Field today than there is at Oceana. The idea that this is going to cost the Navy \$1.6 billion, to me just flies in the face of reality.

The acreage, the infrastructure, to which has been improved to the tune of \$130 million, is all for free. The value of this

real estate and the infrastructure there is assessed at \$1.66 billion.

In addition to the great facilities at a bargain, I think the military value of Cecil Field and the Navy outlying field there is obvious. The 1993 BRAC actually assessed the military value of Cecil Field at a score of 8.14. NAS Oceana was assessed at a score of -0.95. And I would argue that with the ensuing encroachment around Oceana today that that -0.95 would go even lower. Those are not our numbers. Those are not the commission's numbers. Those are the U.S. Navy's numbers and the BRAC effort in '93.

I want to address a couple of operational issues. Number one, the load-out for deployments has been mentioned; the close proximity of the ships, the carriers in Norfolk and the short distance to Oceana. In reality, this is the way a load-out for deployment works, of which there are about 1.5 deployments per coast per year. Trucks go out to Oceana. The squadrons and the wings load their files, load their ground equipment into trucks. They drive across the city about 45 minutes down to the piers and they load them aboard the carriers.

The same thing happens at Cecil Field. You load your equipment and it's a day's drive up to Norfolk. Now, if that's such a serious issue for the Navy, I would ask the question, why is that done at Lamore, California, where there are no aircraft at

the master jet base located anywhere near the coastline? It's 320 miles from NAS Lamore down to San Diego. During my entire time in the Navy, and certainly as a flag officer, I never heard one complaint from the Pacific fleet about the distance from Lamore to the ships.

The second issue I think is worthy of mention is this issue about a classified mission at Oceana. As commander of the Atlantic fleet, I obviously had purview over what happened at Oceana. I was cleared into that classified program. And I can assure you that that mission can be moved to another naval air station in the Norfolk area. And with that, I won't discuss it anymore, but I'm happy to discuss it in private with the commission.

In summary, let me just say this is all about mitigating risk; number one, risk to our pilots, the ability to come aboard the carriers; secondly, the risk of the people who live around this base. I can tell you that Norfolk and Virginia Beach are outstanding, wonderful communities, wonderful people. But there are too many of them living next to the fence line at Oceana. That restricts our operations and in my view endangers the citizens.

Also, it's about mitigating risk to the future of naval aviation in the Atlantic fleet. If we're going to buy another master jet base 10 years from now at the tune of \$2 billion and

the Navy says they don't have the money today, where are they going to get it 10 years from now?

Secondly, where are you going to find a place that's going to take a master jet base and get all the environmental permitting done that's necessary to put it there? And lastly, how are you ever going to do it outside of BRAC process? Impossible, in my opinion.

The bottom line is that Cecil Field, in my opinion, is the right decision for the taxpayers today, as you will hear from Mayor Peyton in just a second. Most importantly, it's the right decision for our young naval aviators, who deserve the opportunity to train the way we ask them to go to war.

With that, let me turn it over to Mayor John Peyton, mayor of Jacksonville, Florida.

MAYOR PEYTON: Thank you, Admiral. And Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, we appreciate your time. And on behalf of the citizens of Jacksonville, we appreciate being part of this discussion.

My name is John Peyton. I have the distinction of serving as mayor of Jacksonville, Florida. You have heard the aviation case for Cecil Field. Now I'd like to present to you the business case for Cecil Field. But first, let me repeat, our commitment is clear: We will return Cecil Field to the Navy as a master jet base, a base that is clear -- that is in better condition than it

was found and clear of commercial tenants and the promise that encroachment will never interfere with Navy operations.

Cecil Field is a unique asset with a great history and an unmatched potential. It is the largest of four master jet bases created by congressional action in 1951. It is three times larger than NAS Oceana, with direct access to unrestricted air space in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, this unrestricted air space is one of the reasons the military value of Cecil was significantly higher than Oceana when analyzed by the Department of Defense in 1993.

Since acquiring the property in 1999, Jacksonville has been a good custodian of Cecil. The city has been improving the base to accommodate a first-tier aviation commerce center. Our investments include \$133 million in infrastructure enhancements, demolition of antiquated buildings, and environmental remediation. In fact, 70 percent of the base is intact and upgraded.

The city did all of this to attract one large aviation enterprise. We've been very close to landing two significant anchor tenants and believe that we are probably the most marketable aviation facility in the country.

In short, Cecil Field is in better shape today than it was in 1999 when it was transferred by the Navy. And because of this value, we have every reason to believe that the window of opportunity for making Cecil available to the Navy is narrow.

There are several things you should know about Cecil Field. There is more hangar space on the flight line at Cecil than there is at NAS Oceana. The hangars have been refurbished and expanded. There is six miles of new roads at Cecil Field, and funding is in place, thanks to our governor, for a \$130 million project to connect Cecil Field to Interstate I-10. Environmental problems have been remediated.

Now, I'd like to speak a moment about encroachment. Encroachment is and will not be a problem at Cecil Field. There are no, I repeat no, improper uses of the accident probability zone -- no schools, no churches, no shopping areas. You will never have the same encroachment problems at Cecil that are currently existing at Oceana. I think this chart up here expresses that contrast.

Currently there are 145,000 people living in the ACUIZ of NAS Oceana, while only 10,000 live in the ACUIZ of Cecil Field. The densely populated ACUIZ in NAS Oceana is, in fact, restricting training and hindering flight operations. There are no such limitations at Cecil, and the air strip can be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

The Jacksonville municipal code lays out clear and detailed restrictions on land use in the ACUIZ, which our city government strictly adheres to. We regulate the sale or lease of property with the ACUIZ through disclosure statements in the deeds.

The threat of future encroachment is virtually impossible due to the major greenbelt that bounds Cecil Field. This is an extraordinary feature of this facility. This permanent buffer prevents encroachment to the north, south and west of the runways. This greenbelt is the result of a successful state and city partnership to preserve land and manage growth.

Jacksonville has the largest park system in America, with over 100 square miles of publicly-owned land. And the state of Florida boasts the most aggressive land acquisition program in the union. We can and will control encroachment. And between the land we own, the land we are scheduled to acquire and the land that we can restrict, encroachment is not and will not be a problem at Cecil Field.

On the business side of this commitment, the city has made a comprehensive effort to estimate cost necessary for re-establishing Cecil Field as a master jet base. We provided construction estimates and capacity data to your staff. Our business experience at Cecil Field gives us a validated number for the square-foot costs of administration buildings, barracks, aviation-related infrastructure.

We believe the cost to re-establish Cecil Field as a master jet base is one-quarter of the amount estimated by the Navy. This large cost discrepancy results from the failure of the Navy to

account for the existing infrastructure currently in place at Cecil.

On August 19th, yesterday, our city council passed a unanimous resolution that calls for the immediate transfer to the Navy the title to Cecil Field. We estimate the monetary value of the land and the buildings of this transfer to be \$1.6 billion. And this is depicted in chart nine.

We commit to transfer the base clear of all commercial tenants no later than December 2009. Additionally, we will support the state's commitment to public-private housing to accommodate Navy arrivals.

We have also included a time line for your view. This conversion of Cecil Field to a master jet base can be completed in four and a half years. We expect the environmental impact study to be a seamless process that will run concurrently with the construction and conversion planning. Construction should take three years. And because Cecil has never stopped operating as a jet base, the EIS will not be a problem.

In summary, let me restate, Jacksonville will turn over Cecil Field free of tenants and environmental problems to the Navy. Encroachment is not and will not be a problem. And all reports that encroachment, commercial leases, air space restrictions or exorbitant costs we have found to be incorrect and not based on facts.

The facts are compelling, and the contrast between Cecil and NAS Oceana is clear. This is a unique opportunity with near-providential timing. This mayor and this governor will pledge to make this work. Cecil Field is the largest and best master jet base in the world. We recognize that the highest and best use of this community asset is to return Cecil to the Navy.

Jacksonville was entrusted with a jewel in the form of a master jet base. We've been good custodians of this jewel. She has been cared for. She is polished. And, quite frankly, she has never looked better. We now seek to return this jewel to its rightful owner, the naval aviators that train diligently to keep us safe.

Now it's my privilege to introduce the senior senator from Florida, Bill Nelson.

SENATOR BILL NELSON (D-FL): Mr. Chairman and commissioners, we're united as an entire congressional delegation. And as you can tell from the testimony thus far, Florida has put its bottom line up front, and that is that Cecil Field and northeast Florida still has its military value, and Cecil should be reoccupied by the Navy.

The evidence that has been presented to you over the last several weeks has been objective, it's been measurable, and it's been compelling. Cecil can give the nation the air, sea and land ranges necessary to achieve the most realistic combat training at

the lowest risk. We don't just have that restricted air space off of the northeast of Florida. We've got almost the entire Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Florida that is restricted.

We're here to demonstrate the Florida delegation's solidarity in support of the re-establishment of the Navy at Cecil. And we're here to demonstrate our total commitment as members of Congress to do whatever is necessary for Cecil. We're here to pledge that the Navy will have the federal resources to make this happen efficiently, effectively, affordably and on time.

Mr. Chairman, I'm a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. And over the last four years, we have examined over and over the need and for the purpose of this BRAC round. And our direct intent has always been that this commission should objectively examine the value of our national military infrastructure, without limitation, and act in the ways that you judge appropriate and necessary to preserve and increase the readiness of our forces and those forces into the future.

We support you to give the men and women of our armed forces exactly what they need, without any limitation, no limitations day and night, without compromises on training and operations, without having to have extraordinary management, and without additional risk, so that they can remain the most capable and ready force the world has ever known.

Thank you again, each one of you, for your personal public service to this commission and throughout the years. And I want to introduce Congressman Ander Crenshaw from Jacksonville.

REP. CRENSHAW: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, I want to echo the words of Senator Nelson and briefly comment on the military construction aspect of this proposal.

I sit on the House Appropriations Committee, the subcommittee that oversees military construction projects throughout the world. And I can tell you that this is an incredible value.

Cecil Field can be made ready for a military construction number of about \$300 million. I don't mean to imply that \$300 million is not a lot of money, but when you take the military value that will be gained and you compare it to the federal dollars that will be expended, and it is flat-out off the charts. It is an opportunity of a lifetime.

My colleagues and I appropriated \$180 million a few years ago to build an outlying field in North Carolina to deal with the training problem at NAS Oceana. Was that a good value? Sure, it was a good value if that's the only option that the Navy had to make sure we train our aviators the way they're going to fight. But when you compare it to a proposal like this, it doesn't add up.

Here's an opportunity to take a military installation valued at \$1.6 billion, transfer it to the Department of Defense at no

cost to the government, absolutely free, spend \$300 million of military construction dollars and have an asset that will meet the long-term needs of our country for the 21st century. That is a great deal for the Navy and a great deal for the people of America.

Thank you. And now let me turn it over to my colleague, Congressman Cliff Stearns.

REP. STEARNS: Thank you, Ander. Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. Frankly, I'm very much honored to be here to be able to speak to you. And I simply appreciate you allowing us to look at Cecil Field again. I remember sitting here in 1993. The roles were reversed at that time. And with my former colleague, Tillie Fowler of Jacksonville, we were looking carefully at keeping Cecil Field open.

Now, Cecil, of course, is located in my congressional district. And it's important to note that the overwhelming support for this proposal comes from the city, the state and the local residents. The area around Cecil Field is still very military-friendly, just as it was when the Navy left.

This Cecil Field was certified back in 1993 as the best option for remaining open for national security. Admiral Nader just pointed that out earlier. Today, like before, when Jacksonville residents hear Navy jets in training, they don't complain at all; quite the opposite. The residents there consider

the sound of military jets in training as the sound of freedom. And that is a very good thing which all of us are proud of.

So it is the goal of all of us here today to ensure that Cecil Field is just as valuable in 50 years as it was in the past. Our commitment today does just that. I strongly urge the commission to seriously consider our proposal.

With that, I return to Governor Bush.

GOV. BUSH: Thank you, Congressman. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. That's the end of our presentation. We appreciate you allowing us to come make this presentation. I also appreciate the fact that, as you know very well, this type of discussion -- it would be impossible to do this through the normal congressional process. Decisions like this of this magnitude come never happen in the normal political process. So I hope that you put politics aside, as you have been over the last few months serving your country. And we'd be happy to answer any questions.

MR. PRINCIPI: Well, thank you, Governor. Thank you all for your testimony this afternoon. Your written testimony will be incorporated into the record.

We have just a few minutes before we will go to the Virginia delegation. I'd like to just ask a couple of quick questions.

Admiral Nader, Admiral Arthur, Florida may soon not have any aircraft carriers home-ported there. What impact will this have

on operations, readiness and cost if the master jet base was moved to Florida?

MR. NADER: Yes, sir, as the fleet commander, I think that's a question I'm happy to take. Number one, I mentioned already in my remarks about trucking the equipment to the carriers when a ship is going to be deployed. When it goes out for operations and training off the coast, the aircraft actually have to fly out from either Oceana, Cecil Field or wherever they're based.

And I would also note that the carriers with the Navy's training resource strategy now train more down off Florida waters than off the eastern seaboard. Why? Primarily because of the ranges -- Pine Castle, soon Avon Park, Eglund Air Force Base. And it's just as easy to fly out of Cecil to that carrier as it is out of Oceana. It's a one-cycle flight, and they go right out to the carriers and do their training. So in my view there's no impact.

Admiral Arthur?

MR. PRINCIPI: Admiral Arthur?

MR. ARTHUR: Yes, sir. I spent most of my flying time out of Lamore in California, so I was very isolated from my carriers. My carriers were either in San Diego at the time or Alameda. Of course, Alameda is gone now, so they're up in Everett, Washington.

But what we did is we flew the aircraft out to the ship or to the air stations if they wanted to hoist them aboard instead of having us fly aboard. And we trucked all of our admin gear. And

it was as routine as it could possibly be. So the one thing that they have going for them in Cecil is that even if the carriers leave Mayport, Mayport is carrier-capable for either conventional or nuclear as far as coming in for a load-out.

So you don't necessarily have to truck to Norfolk if you don't want to. You can bring the carrier in, load it up from there. But in any case, you're going to have to put your admin stuff on trucks, and it's whether you want to drive across town or whether you want to drive up the road to Norfolk.

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you. One very quick follow-up question for our aviators. I certainly agree with you about not wanting to have any unacceptable risks for our naval aviators -- anyone who wears the uniform of our country. We want to optimize training -- critically important. I remember that before I went to Vietnam.

Has the training at Oceana in any way resulted in any mishaps or accidents that you're aware of? I mean, can you attribute any of these training problems to accidents? That's not to say that we're going to -- in the future we want to have the best training possible. But what's been the result of that?

MR. LEENHOUTS: (Off mike.) If you trained at Outlying Field White House in comparison to Outlying Field Fentress -- and I will speak specifically for the mid '80s till the late '80s, when I was the senior force landing signal officer -- we found that those young aviators that did their training out at White House had a 20

percent first-pass success rate higher than those that trained at Outlying Field Fentress due to the very dark, unencumbered flight patterns that were flown out there at those outlying fields.

Additionally, the training incidents -- or the actual accidents, since you brought that up, we did have incidents throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s where aircraft unfortunately crashed in the Oceana area near to the field or on the field, right on the very fence line. And fortunately no one was, other than one young lady, was killed in one of those incidents. And yet one of them crashed literally right there where there is the proximity of a major mall at this time. So there have been crashes out at Oceana and that the training we do out at Fentress didn't produce the same first-pass success rate as we did out at White House due to the conditions.

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

Commissioner Coyle.

MR. COYLE: Commander Craig, in our base visits and hearings and meetings around the country, some of the most candid testimony that we have received has been from relatively low-ranking, working-level military officers and civilians. And we've seen a number of news articles recently where active working-level Navy pilots have told the press that the training limitations at Oceana are producing unacceptable limitations on their training.

My question for you is, to what extent do those statements that we've seen in the press, which seem pretty compelling, represent Navy pilots who train at Oceana in general? In other words, has the press found a couple of disgruntled Navy aviators, or do you think -- to what extent do you think the people who have spoken out about this represent their colleagues?

MR. CRAIG: Yes, sir, I can address that, obviously. I would submit to you, in all honesty, that that is the prevailing attitude amongst today's naval aviators, especially the TAC-air community located at Oceana. For those of us that had the opportunity to fly at both bases, we knew what the other situation was, what the training afforded us at Cecil Field, both in the tactical arena of strike warfare, the ability to drop weapons, the ability to train with live weapons, the ability of our maintainers and ordnance men to practice loading live weapons and seeing aircraft come back without them on board.

When we got to Oceana, that doesn't exist anymore. We don't see that anymore. Certainly the younger officers that have never had the opportunity to serve at Cecil Field and don't have that comparison may -- certainly they feel the effects of the lack of training as we consistently move our training away from Oceana to distance ourselves from the problems around the area. Detachments to Key West, out to Fallon, Nevada, are commonplace. And more and

more show, just so that we can find better training that just doesn't exist at Oceana.

So I'll tell you that, quite honestly, that is the feelings of the naval aviation population. Certainly as the operations officer at the weapons school and seeing all the different squadrons and all the air wings come through on a rotating basis for their inter-deployment training cycles, that was the number one problem that we had, was how were we going to get training done while we were at Oceana and did we have the money to go somewhere else in order to actually complete it the way it should be done.

MR. PRINCIPI: Secretary Skinner.

MR. SKINNER: I just want to go over a couple of issues real quickly. It's my understanding that -- and there's a couple of letters in here, and these letters are all part of the record now. But, number one, it's my understanding that -- maybe I heard this from the mayor and the governor -- that you're prepared -- the state of Florida and the city of Jacksonville will be prepared to turn over title to this property to the United States government by the end of this year?

MAYOR PEYTON: Yes, sir, that's correct.

MR. SKINNER: Number two, it's my understanding that the EIS that would be required for any facility -- that an EIS was recently done for your development -- aviation development -- down

there and that you would have to apply for a new one. But do you have any idea how the EIS for this property would be versus an EIS, not even for the auxiliary field in North Carolina but for a new greenfield jet base?

MAYOR PEYTON: Well, yes, sir, Commissioner. Because the use has not changed and this has been a master jet base and has been having flight operations continuously for decades, we anticipate a seamless process by which the EIS will be completed.

MR. SKINNER: And your commitment to clear title by year-end would also include a commitment of \$200 million in available dollars to clear out the tenants and make it available? Is that correct?

MAYOR PEYTON: Yes, sir, that is a partnership. The state of Florida is agreeing to 150 million (dollars), the city of Jacksonville 50 million (dollars).

MR. SKINNER: Okay. And my one last question is you talk about your estimate, and I understand your estimates were done by a representative of the city of Jacksonville, who has a great deal of BRAC experience. I happen to have met him yesterday. Is that --

MAYOR PEYTON: Yes, sir. We're comfortable that the numbers we've provided are --

MR. SKINNER: And does that 400 million (dollars), did you include any housing in that, or is that in addition to housing?

MAYOR PEYTON: I'll let the governor answer the housing component, but that does not include housing.

MR. SKINNER: Okay, thank you.

MR. PRINCIPI: Congressman Hansen.

MR. HANSEN: Who are the occupants on Cecil Field now, and what would it cost to get them out? And secondly, do you have general aviation in there at the present time? I'd like to know that.

MAYOR PEYTON: Yes, there is general aviation. Seventy percent of the tenants are doing military work -- Flight Star, Boeing is there -- Northrop-Grumman. But all of these -- we've been waiting for the big tenant -- big anchor tenant. And for that reason, most of the leases are on a short term and have provisions to cancel or move. So we have the flexibility, and that's why we think we can get everyone out within three and a half to four years.

MR. HANSEN: Thank you.

MAYOR PEYTON: The estimated cost, Commissioner, that we associated with that move is about \$200 million.

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you. The hour is up. We'll give equal time to the Virginia delegation. But I do want to defer to my colleague, Admiral Gehman.

MR. GEHMAN: Just one quick question. Before I ask this question, because it's kind of a loaded question, I want to make

sure that I'm clean with you. My question is, is your offer to transfer the property to the Department of Defense unconditional?

But before you answer that, let me say that the proposal before the commission is to close or realign Oceana. And one of the problems with encroachment at Oceana is, of course, the noise abatement profile that the pilots have to fly. One of the fixes is to reduce the noise.

So, under the realignment thing, we could perhaps find some combination that we were thinking of in which we reduce the noise around Oceana, but no close Oceana, move a part, a parcel, the rag or something to Cecil.

So now I go back to my question, is your offer unconditional?

MR. PEYTON: I'll answer that, Commissioner. The investment our community and our state will make in this transition would really call for a master jet base. It would be hard to justify the taxpayer --

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you, Governor, and members of the delegation. We very much appreciate your testimony. We'll take a five-minute recess and ask the Virginia delegation.

(Recess.)

MR. PRINCIPI: I'd like to extend a welcome to Governor Warner and members of the Virginia delegation. And, Governor, I'll let you proceed --

MS. SARKAR: Mr. Chairman, we --

MR. PRINCIPI: -- as you deem most appropriate.

Oh, I apologize. Would you please stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment statute?

MS. SARKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(The witnesses were sworn.)

MS. SARKAR: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PRINCIPI: Governor Warner.

GOV. WARNER: (Off mike) -- look forward to the chance to both raise some new information, rebut some of the comments that have been made in the earlier Florida presentation, and again hopefully leave enough time for questions.

So to make sure that we get through all of our presentations, I'm going to turn over for brief comments from Senator Allen, who will actually come back and can close. But, Senator Allen?

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Governor.

Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, good afternoon. Here we are again, discussing the issue of Oceana. (Comes on mike.) You all heard my welcoming.

We do meet again. We meet again after your August 1st -- many of you all, some of you all, came down to Oceana on August 1st. We had a hearing on August 4th. And we're here to respond to yet another attempt to move the master jet base from Oceana.

I have a great deal of respect for the mayor of Jacksonville, Mayor Peyton, Governor Bush, and the whole Florida delegation, and I can understand why leaders from North Carolina or from Texas or from Florida would love to have a master jet base. However, your decisions are to be based upon military preparedness, military value, as well as saving the taxpayers' money. And I believe that when you look at these controlling factors, which have been examined very closely by the Department of Defense, and the Navy, they clearly favor Oceana. I believe that at the conclusion of this hour, and I'm going to actually not use all the time at the end so that you all may wish to pose questions for further clarification. But I do think that at the end of the hour, it will be very clear, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Oceana has the best attributes -- the key attributes.

Number one, proximity to the fleet, which is so important for readiness, for training, for preparedness. Absolutely essential. Now you can have jets fly further distances, but why do that when you can have them so close, especially with these high fuel costs? This is not something that is an insignificant matter for preparedness and readiness. So proximity to the fleet -- key attribute.

Second, unencumbered air space. Clearly, when you look at the evidence, Oceana has unencumbered air space. And when you compare, back in 1993 when Cecil Field was closed, one of the

reasons it was closed, and one of the negatives, was because of all the civilian, commercial aircraft. And that has only increased. Florida's a fast-growing state. There's even more flights going into Jacksonville, Orlando, Miami and elsewhere in that flight pattern, which harms -- clearly harms -- the ability for training.

Second key point, joint training. Joint training is essential.

Fourth, the key location to fill -- fulfill -- and we can't discuss it in great detail -- its special classified military mission. And I can -- we'll talk a little bit more about that. But it also --

The fifth point that you will get from this hour will be an unprecedented effort, and a benefit, and action, on the part of Virginia Beach to assure that land encroachment is alleviated. And you will hear again, as you did this morning, by the way, from Admiral Willard, that Oceana's the best location for the East Coast master jet base.

Admiral Natter, by the way -- on point number four, attribute number four, which has to do with the special classified military mission -- and almost in a passing assertion, he said they could move this special classified national security mission to some other place. Some of the commissioners went to have that classified briefing. And you all understand the requirements for

these special missions cannot be met at any other airfield in the Norfolk area, or anywhere else on the East Coast for that matter. Any vote -- any vote on the future of Oceana -- cannot responsibly be registered until the members of this commission fully understand and can make a sound judgment about the impact that the decision will have on the national security missions of the United States.

Until these special missions requirements, provided to the commissioners as certified data on August 9th, 2005 can be absolutely guaranteed -- absolutely guaranteed -- NAS Oceana must remain in place and fully operational.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the air space issue -- air space encroachment. We will hear from individuals on that. The air space encroachment issue was a problem at Cecil Field. Now it is the Cecil Commerce Center, it is even worse. And I will go into the details of it. We'll have aviators talk about it as well. But there's a very narrow slot that the aviators, our jet pilots, can fly out of Cecil. And it's because of all the commercial aviation. That will be borne out.

Now, Mr. Chairman, and members of the commission, many of you all know, of course, that Senator Warner has been on the forefront of this issue, and whose position has been made very clear regarding military value and the need to retain Oceana. He's unable to be here today because of other Senate commitments. He

has asked that I submit for the record his statement, in which he reiterates his concern that the BRAC process, which was intended to be used to shed excess infrastructure, might be used, in this case, to open a new military installation. He continues to work with the department to ensure that the commissioners are fully aware of the full range of issues involving Oceana and the fact that it has received one of the highest military value scores, the highest BRAC priority, I might add, of all air installations within the Department of Defense.

Most importantly, he asked me to submit -- in addition to his statement, submit to the record the letter he received this very week on August 17th from deputy secretary of defense Gordon England, which outlines the department's strong position that there is, I quote, "there is no viable alternative to Oceana" -- let me get this so you get it all clear -- quote "there is no viable alternative to Oceana Naval Air Station."

So let me make it very clear that the letter is contemporary and is a conclusion even after the department examined the Florida proposal being discussed today.

Now since the full commission has not actually had an opportunity to hear from all the state and local officials, in consultation with Senator Warner, he wanted to yield his time to Congresswoman Drake, Delegate Suit, and Mayor Oberndorf. Their actions in recent weeks have been dramatic and important.

And at the conclusion, I do think you will see that Oceana remains the best site, the best location for all the military attributes. Best for the taxpayers. Best for our security. And we look forward to working with you in the future.

I also do want to put into the record a statement from Congressman Bobby Scott, also from the Hampton Roads area.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and now turn it back to Senator Warner to present part of -- the other part of the delegation and their testimony.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you, Senator. I'm not sure I got promoted or demoted. You moved me to the Senate right --

SEN. ALLEN: Did I say senator? Governor. I've gotten used to Senator Warner all the time. We could create all sorts of controversy on --

GOV. WARNER: I know, all kinds of -- (Laughter.) Stirring the pot.

All right. Let's, again -- thank you, Senator.

Let me, again. I want to make a couple of points and we're going to want to make sure we leave time for questions.

Let's again start with the most basic, simple statement, which has been made by the Department of Defense and the Navy. Neither entity recommend either the closure or alignment of Oceana. We've heard that repeatedly. Again, I want to say I was very impressed with the Florida presentation. But what you heard

from the Florida presentation was a series of opinions, not certified data.

The Navy's assessment, based upon certified data, lists Oceana fifth in overall military value of any air station. Military value also includes all of the components of training. We've heard, and Senator Allen's already made mention, of Admiral Willard's comments, that Oceana remains the most effective location for a master jet base.

Obviously, the Navy's assessment of what it would take to deal with Cecil Field is \$1.6 billion. We've heard, as well, and I know you've reviewed, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England's letter, that says there is no viable alternative to Oceana Naval Air Station. Period.

And a few days ago, you heard from the CNO, Admiral Mullen, after visiting Florida, again repeating his opposition to closing Oceana. In the words of the CNO, Oceana is the right master jet base for the Navy.

Now we heard a number of items coming from the Florida presentation, and these will be addressed by other presenters. But I think it is important that we at least highlight a couple of them.

Some of us were down at Oceana a few weeks ago when we heard from Admiral Turcotte who had served both at Oceana and at Cecil, where he said quite clearly, Oceana was the better facility.

We heard, as well, from young aviators who said, while there are problems, they didn't feel there was any degradation of mission.

We heard from the earlier presentation, comments about no encroachment in terms of air encroachment, when Admiral Turcotte said the absolute opposite. And as recently as July of 2005 in a DOD assessment of ranges and air spaces around Cecil Field, they said there was great constraint by commercial air traffic.

Again, with real data, we have, and you'll see a presentation a little bit later, that shows various FAA-based data of commercial flight patterns comparing Cecil and Oceana. The data is very clear in terms of which has more encroachment.

We heard, as well, a number of comments about Oceana constantly being referred to as a 5,000-acre base. The accurate number is 6,800 acres and an additional 3,600 acres of easement at Oceana, almost double what was referred to in the earlier presentation.

Another item that has been raised was the question, for example, of schools. Well, our data shows that actually within the flight path between getting to the area where you need to train, yes in Oceana, there are seven schools. In Cecil, 26 schools.

So what we have here are conflicting data. One set of data that has been certified by the Navy. Another set of data that has not.

We believe that the certified data is the way to move. I think, as well, to take the step of re-opening a facility that was previously closed, what signal does that send to communities around the country who have spent time, effort and dollars trying to take previously-closed BRAC facilities, and turn them into commercial purposes?

And if we are going to be looking at new facilities, in terms of green fields, again, the Commonwealth of Virginia has put forward in the past, and again we've always continued to support the Washington County outer landing field in North Carolina -- we have a 42,000-acre facility at Fort Pickett that the Navy has made an assessment could be turned into an OLF facility for \$50 million. So if we're going to, in effect, open the bidding for potential sites, we, and I'm sure other states and locations, would like to put forward presentations and proposals.

Again, the dollars we've heard -- \$1.6 billion from the Navy in terms of what it would cost to potentially re-open Cecil.

Now we have heard, loud and clear, your concerns about encroachment. We heard it from the first session. And we feel like we have not simply sat back and listened; we have acted. Back in 2004, the state legislature acted to make sure that the

Navy had a seat at the table in terms of all future land-use decisions. In 2003, I believe it was the joint land-use study. And you'll be hearing again from certain local officials in terms of making sure that on a going-forward basis, we're going to do a much better job.

There's one particular issue that I think has -- that the Navy, I know, has stuck in the craw of the Navy. And I think, perhaps, even a few commission members. The 10-story condo building that was in the flight path. Well again, we heard your message loud and clear, and the state, in conjunction with the city, has bought out that developer. Not a promise, it is under contract. That building will not be built as Oceana continues in Virginia Beach and in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a matter of fact, on the same day that action took place at the city council level in Virginia Beach, five other properties were put on the list to start negotiating to buy out those rights as well. And again, the mayor will make further comments in a few moments about dedicating part of the real estate tax to generate even more funds, in terms of prohibiting further encroachment.

Again I might add, in terms of getting rid of the condo, that was \$15 million cold, hard cash that we put forward.

In addition, you'll hear from others who will lay out what the state will continue to do to promote the close relationship that has existed for a long time between the Navy and the armed

forces and the Commonwealth of Virginia, the hundreds of millions of dollars that we've put forward in terms of improvements around Oceana. As a matter of fact, we now have -- I heard the Florida proposal -- we have a \$500 million Virginia housing development authority proposal for military families to help them buy at below-market rates housing in the Hampton Roads area. Again, one of the reasons why you hear constantly from military families of the value of why they love living in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and more specifically in Hampton Roads.

You'll hear in a moment from Delegate Terri Suit about further state legislative action that we will be taking to make sure that the encroachment will be further restricted, and again more we can do to make sure that what has taken place is, in effect, not only the line is drawn, but we actually even move further back.

I have before me letters from legislative leaders in the House and the Senate, supporting this legislation. And since Virginia still has that antiquated one-term gubernatorial restriction, I have a letter from the two gubernatorial candidates who are currently running, supporting that legislation.

Again, following up with what Senator Allen has said, I believe at the end of our hour, you will hear quite clearly what the Commonwealth of Virginia has been prepared to do to stand up

and support the Navy and the Defense Department's recommendation that Oceana remain the site for the master jet base.

I would like to very quickly, before I turn it over to one of our first military presenters, also recognize that we have here Senator Ken Stolle, one of our general assembly's leading experts on public safety and who represents Oceana, who has got a statement for the record. Delegate Terrie Suit, who you'll hear from for a few moments, will talk about additional legislation she's putting forward. Delegate John Cosgrove, a former vice-mayor of Chesapeake. Again, we've spent a lot of time talking about the beach. As you all know, realize Fentress is actually in the city of Chesapeake, and his strong support for Oceana and Fentress. We also have council member Debbie Ritter, who chairs the joint land-use study policy committee. And given the importance of that joint land-use efforts, I'm very, very pleased for her leadership and the fact that she's here, as well.

I'd now like to call upon for our first briefer, retired captain -- retired Navy captain, Steve Mondul to present some facts that further underscores our position.

Steve?

MR. MONDUL: Thank you, Governor.

All of the information which I will be presenting are certified facts. We have back up for every single of the slides, every piece of data, and we'd be happy to provide that to you, or

your staff, upon your request. And I was sitting in the back and couldn't help but understand that the Florida consulting group raised some questions. And some of the data seems to conflict. It does raise questions. Everything in this presentation is certified facts.

I would like to refresh your memory about this, and my only single comment on this is that there was a allegation made about the scoring between Oceana and the former Cecil Field. That was, as I think you probably know, the scoring -- the initial scoring -- was the result of a unfortunately a calculation error by the Navy. That has been since corrected.

What I'd like to go over today is Oceana's military assets, our unfettered air space, the joint training environment, the proximity to the fleet and fleet support and the safe access to offshore training ranges. All of these considerations save the Navy operational costs for fuel and time.

MR. PRINCIPI: Captain, excuse me for just a moment. Were you sworn when the others were?

MR. MONDUL: Yes sir, I was.

MR. PRINCIPI: I just wanted to make sure. Thank you.

MR. MONDUL: I was back here --

MR. PRINCIPI: No, I -- they raised the question, and I wanted to make sure.

MR. MONDUL: I was.

MR. PRINCIPI: Thank you.

MR. MONDUL: I'll do it again if I need to.

I'd like to look at Naval Air Station Oceana Virginia Beach. Here are the general facts. I believe you have these slides in front of you in folders.

MR. PRINCIPI: Steve, get your mike up a little bit closer.

MR. MONDUL: I'm sorry.

This is Naval Air Station Oceana. I believe you have the slides in front of you in the folders. I would particularly like to invite your attention to that we have 20,000 -- 200,000 square feet of new and existing facilities, constructed or modified to support the closure of the former Cecil Field.

We also have an engine test enclosure, which is known as a hush house, that is very important construction for the ambient noise around the base.

Here are the data on the former Cecil Field. And I would invite your attention to the last bullet.

The slide emphasizes the fact that there, in fact, is growth near Cecil Field and encroachment upon it.

Oceana provides superior fleet support. In particular, NOB Norfolk is not encumbered by ESQD or reactor safeguard clearance considerations.

The outer landing field Fentress is less encumbered than the former Cecil Field's outer landing field of Whitehouse. And on

this overhead you can see housing development directly to the south of Whitehouse.

Oceana, as you can tell, is much closer to the ocean than the former Cecil Field is. What this provides, and my aviation expert here will address this later, is that you're almost wheels up, feet wet right away when you take off from Oceana. Then you have complete tactical flexibility for multi-mission tasking right away off the end of the runway. That's not true from the former Cecil Field.

Air-to-air training a range -- NAS Oceana has a closer air-to-air training range.

TACTS range -- Naval Air Station Oceana has a TACTS range that integrates with the dam neck -- that the -- excuse me.

The dam neck former fleet anti-air warfare training center, and I'm an old Navy guy, and that's what I remember it as. That's where we do all of our shore training with our systems devices, and the interaction is synergistic with Oceana when you can do that. If you remove it from Oceana, it is no longer synergistic.

Cecil Field uses Beaufort Tactical Aircrew Combat Training System, which is 52 miles away, and that's a roughly equivalent distance.

Oceana has a larger air-to-ground inert ordnance range at Dare County.

MR. PRINCIPI (?): Go ahead.

Military housing. Oceana has 932 officer enlisted housing units. The former Cecil Field has none. You've got to either transfer to Jacksonville or decommissioned. In addition to that, as you can see by the note below here, the Centers for Disease Control has found that there may be a future hazard for unexploded ordnance in areas which might be constructed for housing at Cecil.

This slide represents a public health assessment by the CDC about environmental issues for future inhabitants of Cecil Field housing areas, particularly lead-based paint, asbestos and pollutants. The former Cecil Field is a Superfund site. The report to the Congress from the Department of Defense states that the special-use air spaces at Cecil are constrained by commercial air traffic. I've got a couple of future slides that'll show you that graphically.

These two slides illustrate the FAA flight routes. This is the former Cecil Field. This is Naval Air Station Oceana.

GOV. WARNER: Steve, I might mention again, this was a point that was constantly made by -- in our visit to Oceana by all of the aviators and military officials there of the tremendous value that Oceana had in terms of the unencumbered air space versus the very encumbered commercial air space around Cecil.

MR. MONDUL: Next one. We talked about schools within flight paths. If you're going directly from the ocean, as you can see, there were seven schools, as the governor mentioned at Naval Air

Station Oceana. If you went from the former Cecil Field, you would overfly 26 schools.

There's less hazardous weather at Naval Air Station Oceana.

MR. : Although I would count Isabel as -- maybe not made landfall in Virginia Beach, but Admiral Gehman and others were around. It was a hassle.

MR. MONDUL: Yes, sir. Hurricanes do affect Virginia, but they don't make landfall here.

Turning to critical infrastructure, and to clarify, this critical infrastructure is, as designated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or the U.S. Department of Energy, the data comes off of the Department of Homeland Security's IMAP mapping data system.

Fly from NAS Oceana to operation areas, there is no critical infrastructure overflown. If you flew from the former Cecil Field to sea, you can see that there are numerous pieces of critical infrastructure, including a stadium, malls, oil tanks and chemical facilities.

Turning to quality-of-life issues, Naval Air Station Oceana area has superior quality-of-life issues for military families -- schools, higher education, crime levels and health status. I'll go through each of those very briefly.

There's outstanding public schools. There's higher education, continuing education. Next. There's crime. And here's public health measures.

I thank you, Governor.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you, Steve. And again, I think what you're seeing there, beyond some of the quality-of-life issues, are the air encroachment, the environmental issues, which could prove to be very, very significant, that have -- I'm not sure whether the \$1.6 billion that the Navy has assessed includes the potential environmental Superfund costs or not.

With that, I will move over to Meyera Oberndorf to make comments about recent actions by the city of Virginia Beach.

MAYOR OBERNDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and commissioners. Thank you very much for allowing us to be here.

Let me say, we value the strong relationship we have with Oceana, and we will do whatever is necessary to preserve that relationship. In 1993, when a member of the BRAC commission said to me, "What would you do if I told you there are two schools in the APZ zone?" I looked up and said, "We'll move them." And we did exactly that. We spent \$22 million to move the schools, and later found out that they weren't in the APZ area. But we wanted to make our commitment. Our word is our bond.

In the recent past, we've taken other strong actions to preserve Oceana. We removed 205 by-right development units from

around Oceana thru-road projects. We spent \$22 million to purchase approximately 7,000 acres under the agricultural reserve program, a portion of which is located in the inter-facility traffic area. And, by the way, that was pointed out by the base commander as one of the most critical things that the Navy thought.

We are spending millions to provide sound attenuation around Oceana. We're spending more than \$15.5 million to acquire 311 acres of right-of-way for highway projects in noise-zone areas greater than 65 decibels.

Let me state unequivocally, in the strongest possible terms, that our entire city council, our general assembly delegation and our congressional delegation are united on this issue. We are dedicated and committed to the preservation and the future of Oceana.

I hope that you heard Governor Warner when he was gracious enough to tell you that last Tuesday the council voted to spend \$15 million to buy the near-post condominium development, which has been a lightning rod for our protection of Oceana. You've heard about the joint land-use study and that we will go to unprecedented efforts to dedicate part of our local real-estate tax to buy land development rights near Oceana, particularly within the inter-facility traffic area. And the Navy has

identified this, as I said before, as the number one priority for protection.

Over the next 20 years, we will invest, on an annual basis, about \$161 million to continue to buy up the rights. The Virginia Beach city council has listened to your concerns. They have heard the wakeup call. We will continue to host the bravest men and women and their families in our area with the high quality of life that we can offer them.

And just one final note. You've frequently talked about naval aviators concerned about some of their training. But at your behest, when you asked the questions in Virginia Beach, you were also told that they go by the same syllabus whether they're on the West Coast or the East Coast and that our pilots have come out with a sterling record no matter what. So for the sake of naval aviation and national security, for the sake of our fighting men and women, for the sake of those concerned about fiscal responsibility and for the sake of those who value freedom, we implore you to please keep NAS Oceana open as the Navy's East Coast master jet base.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be here this afternoon.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you, Mayor Oberndorf. Now we're going to hear from Delegate Terrie Suit about new additional state legislative action.

DEL. SUIT: Thank you. I'm Delegate Suit. I represent the areas that encompass Oceana, as well as the southern part of Chesapeake, which is south of Fentress. I live in the 79-decibel zone at Fentress, and we don't mind it.

Chairman Principi has repeatedly and explicitly expressed that the encroachment issue is the reason that you put Oceana up for consideration. Virginia Beach has, over the last two years, worked with the Navy on adopting policies to curtail encroachment. I was present at the August 1st and the August 4th meetings with the three voting members of the commission, and it was very clear to me that while the city has represented the changes that they're making, there was a lack of confidence from the commissioners that there would be permanency and longevity to these changes.

In Virginia, land-use decisions are historically made by local government. But there is nothing to preclude the state from mandating those changes and creating those changes in law so that there is permanency and longevity. After the August 4th hearing, I met with the mayor and with the city attorney, and I consulted with my colleagues, Senator Stolle and Delegate Cosgrove, who are here, as well as the speaker of the house, the president pro tem of the senate, and others, the governor's office, and developed a framework of legislation that would provide permanency to these encroachment-curtailling policies that the city is moving forward.

Since that time, I have circulated that draft legislation or that framework to all of the returning members of the House and the Senate. I have a majority of votes in the House and a majority of votes in the Senate that have come in to me by e-mail and by calls over the last three days, and this package will pass.

I've sent you all a letter individually outlining the package, but I'll tell you just very briefly, we have state-mandated zoning controls to address future zoning changes and keep them in compliance with the OPNAV instruction. We have a comprehensive requirement for an evaluation of all existing zoning and a requirement to change zoning where it is constitutionally viable to do so. We have a purchase-of-development-rights program in the accident potential zone to take care of purchasing from willing sellers' properties that are in conflict -- that are already zoned but are in conflict with the OPNAV instruction.

We have an inter-facility traffic area purchase-of-development-rights program. So that brings it to three programs - - the one the mayor spoke of earlier that already exists, that recently bought over 300 acres of development rights outside of Fentress, right across the street from me, as well as the inter-facility and the accident potential zone programs.

We have legislative staff reviewing all of the recommendations from the joint land-use study that was done over the last two years with the Navy, and we're going to be

identifying and codifying any additional items that we possibly can out of that study. And we have a very successful in Virginia military advisory council with members of the different bases and installations that works closely with our elected members on issues that are important to the military.

And as a subgroup of that, legislatively we will create an Oceana-Fentress advisory council consisting of members of council, COMNAV mid-Atlantic region, the CO of Oceana, and the legislative general assembly members who represent those installations, so that we can continue ongoing dialogue and make sure that we are addressing future issues on a consistent basis.

Over the last few days I've circulated this legislation. We have significant support. It will pass, and it will make sure that the city's policy changes will be solidified and will be permanent.

I'm not a high-paid consultant here before you today. I'm a Navy wife of nearly 16 years. And I ran for this office, and I won it a few years ago because I believed strongly, having grown up as an Army dependent, that our military families needed to be involved in the policy decisions of our civilian communities where we reside. I earn a whopping \$17,000 as a state legislator, so there's no money motivation to testify before you here today.

Training, not just adequate training, but superior training experiences, increase the odds that our service members will come

home alive. It's important, and it's important that we do this. And I know it's important, because I have experienced, as recently as six weeks ago, the agonizing hours of waiting for either a call to deliver good news to me or perhaps a knock at the door by the CACO officer.

I was one of the lucky wives. I got the call with the good news. And I can assure you that I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that the military families I represent never have to experience those agonizing hours and have surety that they will only get phone calls of good news.

You can have confidence that the encroachment issue is addressed. We are taking care of it. It is the only reason you put Oceana on this list. Please know that we are motivated by the same things you are motivated by. We are going to take care of this issue. It is going to be permanent. And you can take Oceana off the table.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you, Delegate Suit. Again, that legislation, the letters that I have from the gubernatorial candidates, the leadership that Delegate Suit indicated, the \$161 million, the fact that the 10-story condo -- we bought out the developer -- we have taken action.

Now let's hear from another one of our military experts to address some of the training issues. Captain Granfield.

MR. GRANFIELD: Thank you, Governor, chairman, commissioners. My name is Phil Granfield. I'm a retired Navy captain and naval aviator with 26 years of experience flying F-14s, F-4s and F-18s, with about 4,000 hours of flight time and over 1,000 carrier-arrested landings.

My tours include 10 years of experience as a landing signals officer, training young naval aviators how to train to and fly aboard the aircraft carriers. In my last operational command, I was commander of Carrier Air Wing I, stationed at NAS Oceana, where I was responsible for the tactical training of eight squadrons, to include three F-18 squadrons at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and an F-14 squadron at Oceana.

I have flown tactical training missions from Oceana, from Cecil Field and from every other tactical training base the Navy owns, as well as Atsugi, Japan, where encroachment is a serious issue as well.

Also I'd like to point out that as a private citizen, I have not been paid to come to testify before you today.

Training naval jet aviators from any airfield demands a few things: Easy access to restricted air space or military operating areas; ground ranges; runways for field carrier landing practice; and proximity to carrier-at-sea space.

Each tactical aviation training base that we have has certain restrictions in one or others of these. There is no perfect

location for a tactical training base. However, access to each of these resources is excellent at NAS Oceana, and they all provide quality training for our young naval aviators.

The over-water ranges from Oceana are simple to get to. There is no interface with the FAA. You go straight from tower to approach out to the warning area. You don't even have to talk to an FAA controller. That's the same with getting to the air-to-ground ranges.

The coastal ranges in coastal North Carolina provide great access to joint training, not only inside the tactical aviation community but with E-2s, the ground forces in the Marine Corps, special operating forces, and the Air Force as well.

The restrictions to encroachment at Oceana are similar to restrictions at every other base that I have flown from, and they require procedures for mitigation. The current operating conditions at NAS Oceana, to include flight patterns and altitudes which have existed for decades, do not degrade aviation training. They do require due diligence and dedicated training to abide by, just as every other aspect of naval aviation operations from every other operating location.

With respect to field carrier landing practice, FCLPs, there is no perfect location to conduct FCLPs. Every tactical aviation base and outlying field comes with its own pluses and minuses with regard to simulating a real carrier landing. (Pattern?)

altitudes, (pattern?) procedures, pilot sight picture, power settings, wind conditions, light conditions are all different from one base to the other. And none of them are exactly like flying aboard an aircraft carrier, to include White House and the right-hand pattern that is flown at night by the F-18s before Cecil Field was closed.

Incidentally, the pattern altitude restrictions at Fentress of 800 feet being 200 feet higher than the 600-foot pattern at the ship are self-imposed by the Navy and done to preclude noise, but we could fly 600 feet if the Navy deemed it was required. We don't deem that it's required for training.

However, the key ingredient to a successful carrier landing training is testing the pilot's response to the visual landing aid, or the meatball, with power and flight-control inputs. How a pilot flies the track over the ground to acquire that meatball visually is not as critical as how he flies that ball when he can see it. And that procedure is the same at every facility that we use.

During my tours as senior landing signals officer on the West Coast, I conducted an analysis of training disqualification rates between each aviation community and where they did their FCLP training. My conclusion, after studying those conditions and restrictions of the widely varied FCLP facilities at each base and each OLF, was that the FCLP facility was not a factor. There was

no statistical difference between the performance of pilots, either young or experienced, when they flew aboard the ship based on where they conducted their FCLP training. It wasn't a factor.

Secretary Skinner this morning suggested that the former Cecil Field might be reopened as a result of his visit yesterday to be resurrected as a master jet base. Cecil Field provides less military value, more risk, less synergy, extensive cost, and tremendous turbulence and uncertainty when compared to what we already have at NAS Oceana.

Limitations imposed by the commercial air traffic in the area of the former Cecil Field represent a deviation of military value that should cause this discussion to be dismissed. It's easier to fly in and out of Oceana than it is Cecil Field to get to the over-water air space. The cost of this effort and the ramifications to future fleet readiness and fleet modernization make this a risky proposal.

In summary, the encroachment issues at Oceana and at Fentress need to be addressed. The commitment by the community and by the Navy to address the outlying field issues have been stated here today. However, in my professional judgment, and based on my extensive background in tactical aviation and carrier operations, the current conditions at NAS Oceana do not result in a degradation of training. Oceana remains the best place to do

tactical aviation training on the west coast -- I'm sorry -- on the east coast of the United States.

Thank you very much for your time, sir.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you very much. We'll now hear a final presentation from Congresswoman Thelma Drake, and then be happy to take any of your questions.

REP. DRAKE: Thank you, Governor Warner, Chairman Principi, commission members. Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

To begin, we have heard varying numbers on the costs associated with moving and reopening at Cecil Commerce Park. The Navy estimate is \$1.6 billion. On Virginia's behalf, I request the commission share with us the Navy's certified data on which the commission's estimate is based. I believe it is incumbent upon us to return to the primary factor that is to be used in the decision-making process in BRAC. That primary factor is military value.

Secretary Rumsfeld has stated, first, as required by law, the primary factor in each BRAC decision has been an assessment of any installation's underlying military value. This was echoed by General Richard Myers when he testified before you on May 16th.

Our senior senator, John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and a key drafter of the BRAC law, wrote this week reminding the commission that Congress, working in concert with the secretary of Defense, directed that military value be

given the greatest priority in the selection criteria during the 2005 round of the BRAC closure and realignment.

For the purpose of review, Oceana is ranked first out of 36 in military value for operational infrastructure, eighth out of 36 for operational training, and sixth out of 36 overall for naval and Marine Corps air stations. The military value of Oceana is comparatively very high, and it demonstrates that Oceana provides quality training for our Navy pilots in a quality environment.

Testimony from the Department of Defense and the Navy has consistently stated that Oceana is the Navy's best option for its East Coast master jet base. Just this week, during a visit to Mayport Naval Station, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Mullen stated, "I testified before the BRAC commission a few weeks ago, and my position then, as it is now, is that Oceana is the right master jet base for the Navy. There are some challenges there, encroachment being a very specific one, but I'm comfortable that we are able to minimize any sort of risk associated with the training and that Oceana will serve us well into the future."

Admiral Mullen has made it clear that it is the Navy's policy to maintain Oceana as the Navy's East Coast master jet base. Admittedly, Admiral Mullen is correct in saying we have some encroachment issues at Oceana. However, these are issues the city of Virginia Beach, the city of Chesapeake and the Navy have been addressing, as you have heard today.

The concerns of the commission over pilot training are valid. But I should point out that the impact on training is considered an element in determining military value. By definition, the issues at Oceana have not diminished the training and readiness of our Navy pilots to the degree that military value is significantly impacted.

What is important is what takes place in the sky, inside the aircraft, and the evolutions that our pilots go through to ensure they are fully capable to defend our nation and project legal power forward in support of our military operations.

I believe when all facts are considered that you will agree with the Department of Defense and with the Navy and determine that Oceana best meets the mission of an East Coast master jet base. And I thank you.

GOV. WARNER: Thank you, Thelma. Again, Senator Allen wants to make one more comment. Again, let me come back to what we think are our major points. The Navy and DOD says Oceana is the best. The certified data ranks Oceana sixth in terms of Marine and naval air station, fifth in terms of overall air stations in terms of the military value, using certified data.

We've heard you loud and clear on the encroachment issue and we have taken tangible, specific action. To introduce at this late date, without certified data, the potential of other sites that may have environmental issues, that have clearly issues about

air encroachment, do not look at other potential sites if we're going to, in effect, open it up for possibilities like Fort Pickett and others, 42,000 acres, \$50 million price tag, as opposed to the \$1.6 billion, a lot of questions that need more time than late action in the BRAC process.

We respectfully request and recommend that taking the actions that Virginia and the city have taken and the military assessments made by DOD and the Navy, that we take this as a lesson. But we look forward to a long and continuing relationship between the Navy and Oceana.

Senator Allen.

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Governor. Sir, put on the civilian aviation charts, Virginia Beach versus Jacksonville, if you would, please.

Mr. Chairman and members of the commission, Delegate Suit said it correctly. The main concern through all of this matter on Oceana has always been encroachment. But for the encroachment, if you look at the military-value factors, proximity of the fleet, proximity to the fleet is important. Absolutely it's helpful for efficiency and readiness.

Sure, you can ameliorate it one way or the other. You can fly 400 or 500 miles. But why do that when you need to have a rapid deployment, especially in this global war on terror? And the president's first question any time there's a problem is

"Where are the carriers?" And so that is important. There's a great military value.

The joint training with Langley Air Force Base, that's very key to have dissimilar planes. It's good for training of both, both from out of Langley as well as Naval Air Station Oceana. The special mission -- don't forget that special mission, which only can be done at the specific site. And we can't right now talk about that classified aspect of it.

Then you get to air space. You talk about encroachment on the land. There's encroachment in the air, which actually probably means a whole heck of a lot more to a pilot, because that's where in the heck the naval aviators are -- in the air. And they'll have all sorts of different landings -- sometimes on carriers, sometimes in outlying fields, which will be ameliorated even more with the new outlying field, most likely in North Carolina or elsewhere.

But here you have this conflict with civilian aircraft. This is one of the reasons why, in 1993, the BRAC commission demoted or voted against, decided against what is now the Cecil Commerce Center, but Cecil Field. This is something that cannot be ignored. In fact, what happens is the pilots, when taking off through there, have a very narrow altitude they need to go through. It's a different situation also with the hurricane

season, storm seasons. And, in fact, there's even a change in the civilian aircraft if there are thunderstorms.

All of this ends up reducing the amount of time the pilots, when they were flying out of Cecil, could actually be in training. This is a significant matter. So that's why Admiral Willard once again this morning talked about the uncertainty of moving to Cecil. He talked about the air encroachment as an issue, and he talked about the cost.

Now, the only certified data is it's \$1.6 billion, and the payoff is over 100 years. And there are a lot of good business leaders right now on this commission, and if you were making an investment, whether for yourself or your company, you're going to get a payoff in over 100 years, the shareholders would vote you out. You want to get a payoff generally in the private sector of six to 10 years. Ten years would be about as long as you want to go.

So this is a great uncertainty. And so, for the military value and for the taxpayers, it's important to keep Oceana open, and also recognize that the only burr under the saddle for all of us, and particularly you all, was the rezoning issues, in particular this high-rise.

Well, the city council of Virginia Beach has taken an unprecedented move. They've removed that burr from underneath the saddle. And they've also promised, I think very credibly, that

