

2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2005

1:30 PM

SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL

ARLINGTON, VA.

STATE TESTIFYING:

VIRGINIA

COMMISSIONERS PRESIDING:

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman

The Honorable James H. Bilbray

The Honorable Philip E. Coyle, III

General Lloyd W. Newton, USAF (Ret)

Brigadier General Sue Ellen Turner, USAF (Ret)

Charles Battaglia, Executive Director

Rumu Sarkar, Associate General Counsel

CHAIRMAN:

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi

WITNESSES:

The Honorable Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia

The Honorable John W. Warner, U.S. Senator, VA

The Honorable George F. Allen, U.S. Senator, VA

Congressman Jim Moran, VA-8

Congressman Tom Davis, VA-11

Jay Fiset, Arlington County.

General Paul Kern, USA (Ret.)

Ed Sheehan, Night Vision Laboratory

Congresswoman Thelma Drake, VA-2

Congressman Robert C. Scott, VA-3

Mayor Ross A. Kearney, Hampton, VA

Mayor Joe S. Frank, Newport News, VA

Reported by:

Megan McKenzie, RPR

OPENING STATEMENT OF ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI, CHAIRMAN,
DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Good afternoon.

I'm Anthony Principi, and I will be the chairperson for this regional hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

I'm also pleased to be joined by my fellow commissioners, Congressman Jim Bilbray, who represented Nevada in the House; the Honorable Phillip Coyle; General Lloyd Newton, United States Air Force, retired; General Sue Turner, United States Air Force, retired. I'm certainly pleased to welcome the distinguished governor, Senator Warner, Senator Allen, members of the Congressional Delegation of Virginia.

As this commission observed in our first hearing, every dollar consumed in redundant, unnecessary, obsolete, inappropriately designed or located infrastructure is a dollar not available to provide training to win a soldier's firefight or fund advances that could ensure continued dominance of the air or seas or provide a training that might save a Marine's life.

The Congress entrusts our Armed Forces with vast but not unlimited resources. We have a

responsibility to our nation and to the men and women who bring our Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps to life, to demand the best possible use of limited resources.

Congress recognized that fact when it authorized the Department of Defense to prepare a proposal to realign or close domestic bases. However, that authorization was not a blank check. The members of this commission accepted the challenge and necessity of providing an independent, fair and equitable assessment and evaluation of Secretary Rumsfeld's proposals and the data and the methodology used to develop that proposal.

We committed to the Congress, to the President, to the American people that our deliberations and decisions would be open and transparent and that our decisions would be based on the criteria set forth in the statute.

We continue to examine the proposed recommendations set forth by the Secretary of Defense on May 13 and measure them against the criteria for military value set forth in the law, especially the need for surge manning and for homeland security.

But be assured we are not conducting this review as an exercise in sterile cost accounting. This commission is committed to conducting a clear-eyed reality check that we know will not only shape our military capabilities for decades to come but will also have profound effects on the communities and on the people who bring our communities to life and certainly our military installations to life.

We also committed that our deliberations and decisions would be devoid of politics and that the people and communities affected by the BRAC proposals would have site visits and public hearings, as we are today, and a chance to provide us with direct input on the substance of the proposals and of the methodologies and assumptions behind them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of involved citizens who have already contacted the commission and shared with us your thoughts, concerns and suggestions about the base closures and realignment proposals. Unfortunately, the sheer volume of correspondence that we have received makes it impossible for us to respond to each and every one of you in the

short time within which this commission must complete its work and submit a report to the President on September 8.

What we want everyone to know, the public inputs we receive are appreciated and are taken into consideration as a part of our review process; and while everyone in this room will not have an opportunity to speak, every piece of correspondence received by the commission will be made a permanent part of our record, as appropriate.

Today we will hear testimony from the State of Virginia. The state's elected delegation has been allotted a block of time, determined by the overall impact of the Department of Defense closures and realignment recommendations on the State of Virginia.

The delegation members have worked closely with their communities to develop agendas that I am certain will provide information and insight that will make a very valuable part of our review, and we would greatly appreciate your adhering to your timelines, every voice today is important.

I now request our witnesses for the State of

Virginia who will be testifying today to stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment statute. The oath will be administered by the commission's designated federal officer, Rumu Sarkar.

(Whereupon, the witnesses were sworn.)

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Governor Warner?

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. MARK R. WARNER,
GOVERNOR FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

GOVERNOR WARNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. My name is Mark Warner. I'm governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

And before I start, let me just express on behalf of all of the speakers today and all of us here our grief, concern and our thoughts and prayers for the victims of the terrorist bombings in London earlier today.

We condemn the murderers who commit such acts. We are firmly united with our president in our national efforts to defeat terrorists both at home and abroad. I know the resilience with which the President speaks, we will ultimately win this struggle.

I want to also personally thank the members

of the commission. We had a chance to meet with Chairman Principi a little bit earlier in this session, and I want to personally thank all of you for taking on this enormous responsibility. We know you do not have an easy job; but the President has entrusted you with something that is terribly important; and we view you as a body that we look forward to working with.

Let me briefly describe to you the agenda for our oral presentations today. In my remarks, I will provide an overview of the BRAC issues that affect all portions of the Commonwealth. Senator Warner will then address the BRAC process and specific issues associated with legislation created to implement at BRAC. Senator Allen will follow him and will speak to the unique benefits and synergies in Virginia to the military and its very, very critical missions. Following Senator Allen, we will have a panel of speakers on issues that coincide with Northern Virginia, followed by a panel that will address issues in Hampton Roads and, if time permits, the Fredericksburg region as well.

In addition, we have submitted for the record and in great detail the important written material

which we believe will be crucial to your deliberations.

In our remarks today, we want to emphasize to you four key points:

First, Virginia remains committed to its centuries-long tradition of supporting the needs of America's military. Because of our unique concentration of military bases in Virginia from all branches of the service, we are uniquely positioned to provide common security, to support the transformation efforts initiated by the Secretary, and to be accessible to both the Pentagon and other National Capital Region agencies. We truly have the Virginia military advantage.

Second, Virginia and its communities, and there are many from the communities affected, are well equipped to handle the proposed expansions at Fort Belvoir, Quantico, Fort Lee, Norfolk Naval Base and Shipyard.

Third, let me acknowledge that we're not saying that every recommendation of closing and moving was wrong in Virginia; but we do believe there were certain recommendations that we'd like to point out some additional facts, specifically

the decision to close Fort Monroe, to shift missions and personnel from Fort Eustis and Dahlgren. We believe we can make the case that these were not supported by sound strategic analysis.

And fourth, and we'll spend some time -- and I will come back and revisit this subject after Senator Allen has finished. The recommendations to vacate over eight million square feet of leased space in Northern Virginia is unnecessary for the security of our military forces, inordinately expensive, and inconsistent with the BRAC legislation and inconsistent with the treatment of leased space in other areas of the country. In particular, we will spend a great deal of time on this subject.

DoD's recommendations to move five extramural research commands from Northern Virginia to Maryland is flawed because it's failed to consider lower-cost alternatives available in close proximity to the current locations of those agencies, close-by alternatives that would not provide the disruption that the proposed move would ensure, and close-by alternatives that will actually save DoD more money than their proposals.

These points will obviously be elaborated.

Let me start with first, the Virginia advantage. The Commonwealth of Virginia and the host of community leaders all across this room consider the needs of the military in Virginia to be one of our highest priorities. This has been a historic fact.

As a matter of fact, that commitment of Virginia to our nation's military goes a long way back. One of the bases you have scheduled for closure, Fort Monroe, back in 1821, Virginia actually gave the land to the U.S. Military to create Fort Monroe. Virginia continues today to provide unique location, strategic and quality-of-life advantages for America's military forces. Senator Allen will spend some time addressing these issues.

Let me now turn to my second point, our ability to support the recommendations for base expansions in Virginia. Virginia's communities are ready, willing and able to support the proposed expansion at installations throughout Hampton Roads, Central Virginia and Northern Virginia. We have already more than 250,000 defense-related workers already that live and work

