Mr. President, Mr. Vice President and Honorable Members of Congress

I invite you to review the attachments concerning the $10.5 Billion disaster aid package and the decision to move 1,000 TACOM-Rock Island employees to TACOM-Warren.

The aid approved by Congress and President Bush for this devastating disaster is a necessary action for our fellow Americans to regain the livelihood they once knew. My concern is: Is this possible with the current decision by the BRAC? We’re wasting time and money realigning the Government when all efforts (both personnel and monetarily) should be expended towards the victims of this catastrophe. The logistics itself is astronomical and a nightmare. We are currently deploying military personnel from Ft. Bragg to New Orleans for this undertaking. We are supplying water, food, shelter, medical care, and hope. But these efforts come at a price.

It is difficult for me to imagine how these people are coping with this devastation. How will they go back to a “normal” life? They will, with the assistance from their Government. A Government that cares about their people and will do whatever is possible.

How can we make this possibility a reality? How can we make our American Neighbors feel safe? How can we make them feel secure once again? How can we provide them a “life”? By taking the appropriate and much needed action. I have done what I could do by immediately donating to the Red Cross. Now we are asking our Government to do what they can do. Again, these efforts come at a price.

At what price are we, as Americans and our Government, willing to sacrifice? How has the past BRAC decisions affected the current situation? Closures such as the O’Hara Air Reserve Base – which was totally equipped with an air-deployable medical unit – could have come to the aid of the Hurricane victims. The next question is: How will the current BRAC decision affect any future disasters? The defense officials say with the closures/realignments, they will save some $49 billion over the next 20 years. Is this now a true statement? We are spending Billions towards the Hurricane aid. How can we now say that we are going to save $49 Billion over 20 years? What will happen in 20 years? What will we incur in the process of these closures/realignments? Moving personnel, equipment, and a decline in one state’s economy and filtering another’s? A prime example is the Michigan move. I quote from a statement from Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm in the Quad City Times (28 August 2005): “The jobs that are coming to Warren are precisely the kind of jobs we need to transform Michigan’s economy”. The BRAC’s decision was not to be for a State’s benefits (economy) – perhaps Governor Granholm was misinformed of the purpose of the BRAC.
How will we recover from the expenses of the Hurricane aid package of $10.5 Billion? This is just the beginning. There will be more dollars allocated for the restoration/rebuild of New Orleans and the entire Gulf Coast area. The same political decision made for the Billions of dollars exhausted for the rebuild of Afghanistan and Iraq from our budget.

What can we do? What is the answer? Americans are suffering from the high cost of gas, food, clothing, living expenses. Must we further endure the ill-advised, bad timing of the BRAC decision? We must utilize the dollars appropriated for the closures/realignments towards the rebuild of the Gulf Coast and maintain Homeland Security.

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, and Honorable Members of Congress – I urge you to cancel the BRAC’s decision. Now is not the time for these proceedings. We must concentrate all of our resources – both personnel and monetary - for the recovery of our Southern Neighbors.

I thank you for your time, service, and consideration in this matter of dire importance to the Nation.

Very Respectfully,
Joyce T. Ethington

Copy Furnished To:
Senator Tom Harkin
Senator Barack Obama
Representative Jim Nussle
Governor of Iowa – Tom Vilsack
Governor of Illinois – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202
Top jobs could leave RI Arsenal

Q-C stands to lose skilled positions with high salaries

By Ed Tibbetts
QUAD-CITY TIMES

They are the kinds of jobs any community would covet — high-paying and highly skilled.

And if President Bush and Congress ratify the decisions made last week by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, 1,600 Arsenal Island jobs will be headed out of the Quad-Cities, about 1,000 of them on the way to Michigan.

Political leaders there clearly see their value. “The jobs that are coming to Warren are precisely the kind of jobs we need to transform Michigan’s economy,” the state’s governor, Jennifer Granholm, said last week.

It is one of the reasons Quad-City leaders fought so hard to keep the jobs here. They are the type of positions and people this community covets, too.

The battle is not over yet, although officials conceded last week that it is going to be a tall order to keep them here. In the meantime, some of the focus has been to shift — at least incrementally — away from fighting the change and toward the next step in the base-closing process: helping the people affected and recovering as a community.

Arsenal and work force officials began meeting Friday and will continue during the coming weeks to put together the pieces of a plan to determine how to deal with the human and economic consequences.

A schedule was put together Friday on Arsenal Island to assess and meet worker needs. Eventually, the base expects to provide such things as help with writing resumes, applying for jobs, retirement planning and family counseling, said Gale Smith, a spokeswoman for the installation.

“We’re hoping for the best, but we’re planning for the worst case,” she said.

Arsenal officials have said that most people will not make

WHAT'S NEXT

The vast majority of proposals to close or significantly restructure 67 major U.S. military bases were approved this week by an independent panel. The panel of retired military officers and former congressmen and Cabinet officials, however, did reject some proposals to close bases they felt were of military value.

What happens next:

• Sept. 8. Deadline for the commission to report its recommendations to President Bush.

• Sept. 23. Deadline for the president to accept or reject the commission's list in its entirety.

If Bush rejects the first list, he sends it back to the commission with recommended changes. The commission is not obligated to make the president's changes.

New Orleans told to pack up, get out
Bush tours devastation

President faults relief efforts as ‘not acceptable’

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Scourged by criticism about sluggish federal help, President Bush acknowledged the government’s failure to stop lawlessness and help desperate people in New Orleans. "The results are not acceptable," Bush said Friday in the face of mounting complaints from Republicans and Democrats alike.

Bush promised to crack down on crime and violence, flush food and medicine to the needy and restore electrical power in weeks to millions of customers across the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. "This is a storm that requires immediate action now," the president said after a daylong tour of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. "I understand the devastation requires more than one day’s attention. It’s going to take the attention of this country for a long period of time."

Congress passed a $10.5 billion disaster aid package, and Bush said he would sign it by day’s end. He also said National Guard troops were moving in to restore order in New Orleans. He said the city’s convention center, where thousands of people sheltered for days in unsafe conditions, was secure.

Inspecting Gulf Coast disaster scenes from the air and on the ground, Bush said the damage was "worse than imaginable." He concluded weeping women and praised Coast Guard teams that pulled stranded people from the roofs of flooded homes. In New Orleans, Bush flew by helicopter to the ruptured 17th Street levee and watched workers load huge sandbags that were airlifted and dropped into the breach. He stayed far from the worst-hit areas of the city and places that have been gripped by crime.

Bush met with state and local officials, including New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin who a day earlier had lashed out at federal officials: "They don’t have a clue what’s going on down here."

"The president is starting to grasp the magnitude of the situation," said Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., said, "The president obviously was just stunned" by what he saw.

Bush sprinkled levity in his remarks at New Orleans’ airport at the end of the day. He talked about coming to New Orleans years ago and enjoying himself "occasionally too much." He said he believed the city will recover and "be a better place to come to."

Four days after Katrina killed hundreds if not thousands, Republicans joined Democrats in wondering why it was taking so long to relieve the misery of so many people living in squalor without the necessities of life.

"If we can’t respond faster than this to an event we saw coming across the Gulf for days, then why do we think we’re prepared to respond to a terrorist or biological attack?" asked former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Republican.

Republican Gov. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts called the government’s response an "embarrassment."

Rep. Mark Foley, R-Fla., called upon Bush to recall National Guardsmen stationed in Iraq whose homes and families were in the path of Katrina’s destruction. The president said there were enough Guard troops for Iraq and recovery efforts.

The storm of criticism was mounting for a president who won widespread praise for his handling of the terrorist attacks four years ago. It was an unwelcome turn for the Republican in the opening months of his second term.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Snoop Dogg files suit against car dealership

PHILADELPHIA — Snoop Dogg is seeking $2 million from a car dealership that he accuses of having misappropriated his image and speech pattern in its advertisements.

In a lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court, the 33-year-old rapper, born Calvin Broadus, alleges that the Gary Barbera Enterprises used the same line in a recent Chrysler TV commercial featuring Lee Iacocca. "If the ride is more fly then you must buy."

Rapper 50 Cent has also filed a similar lawsuit against Barbera seeking $1 million in damages.

The Philadelphia Daily News quoted Barbera marketing director Eric Gerstein as saying the lawsuit is over "the same lyrics, different beat. We’ve already been in contact with Snoop’s people, we’re working it out."

Neighbor sues to halt filming of ‘Real World’

KEY WEST, Fla. — MTV’s long-running “The Real World” is no hit with tour magnate Edwin O. Swift III.

Swift, owner of Historic Tours of America, is suing to stop the show from filming its 17th season at the house and property next to his in the exclusive Key Haven neighborhood. A court hearing is likely this month.

There was no immediate response to a request for comment from MTV or its parent, Viacom Inc.

In the lawsuit, Swift says exterior lighting installed by the production company is brighter than that used at the local high school football stadium and will interfere with family activities such as relaxing and sleeping.

Direct "Virgin" to "Apartment"

The & logo is in the "I do.

Apat stfu! Sts have p do the Rogen.