

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

BRAC Commission

AUG 23 2005

Received

August 17, 2005

BRAC Commission
2521 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

As you begin your final deliberations on recommendations, we would like to reiterate some of the points we presented to you and the BRAC Commission on July 6, 2005 at the New England hearing.

Rhode Island is a vested partner with all military service branches located in the state. Working through the General Assembly and Governor's office, the state has significantly reduced military operating costs for the DoD installations in Rhode Island. We, the Congressional delegation, have worked to ensure that these installations have state-of-the-art facilities. In addition, the Rhode Island business community shows its support for military personnel and the family by offering discounts on products and services through the RI Salutes program.

In its initial recommendations, the Department of Defense (DOD) recognized the military value of both the Navy and the various National Guard units located in Rhode Island. DOD has demonstrated that Rhode Island is home to America's intellectual capital resource for: Undersea Warfare Systems RDA/T&E, strategic thought and national security policy innovation for the Navy and Joint Professional Military Education. However, we remain concerned that DOD recommended that the Maritime Information Systems at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) and the Navy Warfare Development Command (NWDC) at Naval Station Newport (NSN) be moved out of the Newport area. We do not believe that relocation of these two functions will result in increased military value and cost savings.

When NWDC was transferred to Newport from Virginia just a few years ago, it took approximately 5 years to hire the qualified personnel necessary to begin to provide a useful product. If NWDC is moved a second time, it is more than likely these personnel will not follow, and disruption will occur again. We also believe the NWDC would better serve the Navy without being co-located with the fleet, where there is the risk that NWDC would be caught up in day-to-day problems. NSN has provided the NWDC with the autonomy that has seen the NWDC produce its finest work for the Navy. Furthermore, the NWDC has developed and assimilated into a major player with the Naval War College and the Naval Strategic Studies Group to generate joint strategic and tactical naval maritime policies.

DOD also recommended that the Maritime Information Systems department at NUWC be moved to San Diego, which is dedicated to development of surface ship antennas. However, submarine antennas have very little in common with surface ship antennas due to the unique undersea environment. Newport has created a virtual submarine to support end-to-end testing of major submarine non-propulsion electronic subsystems, which otherwise would have to be done on operational platforms. This platform representative testing cannot be accomplished with the radio room located in San Diego and the remaining Combat System in Newport due to security and cross country data delay issues. While the COBRA data estimates that it would cost \$9.5 million to reconstitute the necessary facilities in San Diego, we understand that the estimated costs are to \$230 million. In addition, historical and demographic data indicate that less than 15% of the affected personnel will relocate across the country. This loss of intellectual capital would devastate the Nation's capability in submarine communications. And the emergent submarine threat posed by China, Iran and North Korea requires improved undersea warfare and submarine communications.

Naval Station Newport and its strategic educational and R&D Commands are the direct products of 30 years of Navy and Rhode Island investment that has created a unique center of excellence in undersea systems technology, senior officer training and strategic thought and national security policy innovation for the Navy. We do not believe that the proposed BRAC realignments regarding the Maritime Information Systems and the Navy Warfare Development Command would achieve DOD's goal for military value or true costs savings and we respectfully request that you reconsider these recommendations.

Sincerely,



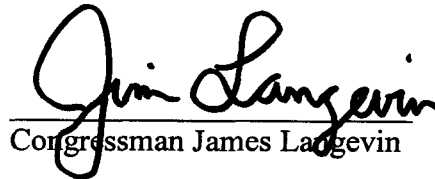
Senator Jack Reed



Senator Lincoln Chafee



Congressman Patrick Kennedy



Congressman James Langevin