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BOB STUMP NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003

MAY 6, 2002.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. STUMP, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted the following

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 4546]

This supplemental report shows the additional views of the Honorable Gene Taylor, submitted May 2002, with respect to the bill (H.R. 4546), as reported, which was not included in part 1 of the report submitted by the Committee on Armed Services on May 3, 2002 (H. Rept. 107–436, pt. 1).

This supplemental report is submitted in accordance with clause 3(a)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

79–451

ADDITIONAL VIEW OF HON. GENE TAYLOR

I am greatly disappointed that my amendment to repeal the FY2005 BRAC round was not adopted by the House Armed Services Committee. With our nation's focus on the ongoing war on terrorism, this is not the time for another round of base closures. The Defense Department claims tremendous savings from previous BRAC rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995. In fact, a recent GAO report estimates those savings as $16.7 billion through 2001 and $6.1 billion in annual recurring savings thereafter. However, GAO characterizes these estimates as imprecise and rough approximations, and since DoD has not accurately tracked its BRAC savings, the report does not contain a breakdown of the purported savings by service, let alone a list of savings by installation. Furthermore, DoD has yet to inform the Committee of any weapon system for which procurement has been made possible through BRAC savings.

The strain on our communities with military installations over the previous four BRAC rounds was immense, and we are about to put all of those lucky enough to survive the previous rounds through the whole process again. BRAC impacts the entire community. It impacts the longtime base employee just a few years short of retirement who wonders if he'll have to forego the retirement pension which he has almost earned or uproot his family and relocate to take another Government job. It impacts the small business owner who relies upon income from military personnel and their families from the base. It also impacts the local government that spends valuable time and money trying to save their base.

Most troubling is that some of our decisions in previous BRAC rounds have not proven to be very smart. We have already given away so many bases that we are now faced with building new installations for the basing needs of new weapons platforms. In fact, we may soon have to buy additional land to build an outlying airfield on the east coast to accommodate the new F/A–18E/F Super Hornets for the Navy which are likely to be based at either NAS Oceana, Virginia, MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina or MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina. It's likely that none of these bases will have the air traffic capacity for all of the Super Hornet squadrons, and even if the squadrons are split between two of the bases, a new outlying airfield will probably be necessary.

The difficulty that the Navy is having in basing the Super Hornets on the east coast pales in comparison to what that service will face when it tries to find a home for its Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) squadrons which will begin to join the fleet in 2010 to complement to the Super Hornet. The most disturbing aspect of this dilemma is that the Navy had another jet fighter base at NAS Cecil Field near Jacksonville, Florida, but that installation was closed in the 1993 BRAC round. The 480 Navy-variant JSF's that will be procured will produce even greater pollutants and noise than the

Super Hornet. When NAS Cecil Field was ordered to be closed, nobody in DoD saw the JSF on the horizon though the JSF program was initiated just a year later in 1994. At that time, perhaps few could have predicted the impact of new and stricter environmental limitations on aircraft basing decisions. As difficult as it is to base the Super Hornets for the Atlantic Fleet, the struggle to find a home for 200 or more JSF's at an existing east coast installation might just be impossible. The problem is further compounded by the Marine Corps' need to base half of its planned procurement of 609 JSF aircraft somewhere on the east coast. We face a very real possibility of having to build a new base to house the JSF operational squadrons at what will be an astronomical cost. The Navy needs a base near the ocean to facilitate aircraft operations and training. The BRAC savings that DoD likes to boast of in their pursuit of further base closures could be significantly wiped out by the real estate acquisition alone. Then one must consider the cost of constructing up to four runways of 8000 feet or more, several hangars and maintenance facilities, dozens of office buildings, hundreds of family housing units and huge barracks complexes, and all the support functions and facilities infrastructure to service a small city. The best option might be to re-open NAS Cecil Field, but that base has already been given away to the City of Jacksonville and developed for both residential and industrial purposes.

If DoD is already faced with basing shortages as a result of overzealous efforts in previous base closure rounds, it makes absolutely no sense to pursue BRAC in 2005 or for many years after that. DoD argues that it has 23% excess infrastructure capacity, but the services will not or perhaps cannot tell us which bases are excess. Given our understandable inability to predict all of our future defense requirements, it even makes sense to keep a reasonable amount of excess base capacity. Otherwise, as Congress is asked to authorize the construction of new bases, it will find itself wishing that other BRAC installations like NAS Cecil Field had not been closed.

GENE TAYLOR.

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