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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT
109–243

DISAPPROVING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

ADVERSE REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

H.J. RES. 65

together with

ADDITIONAL AND DISSENTING VIEWS

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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109TH CONGRESS 1st Session | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES | REPORT 109–243

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SEPTEMBER 29, 2005.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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

ADVERSE REPORT

TOGETHER WITH

ADDITIONAL AND DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.J. Res. 65]

The committee on Armed Services, to whom was referred the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 65) disapproving the recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, having considered the same, report unfavorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the joint resolution does not pass.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

House Joint Resolution 65, introduced on September 20, 2005, by Congressman Ray LaHood, disapproves the recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission as submitted by the President on September 15, 2005.

The resolution is one of two identical resolutions of disapproval introduced by members of the House. It meets the requirements for a resolution of disapproval as provided by section 2908(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–510, as amended).

Enactment of a joint resolution of disapproval within the timeline prescribed by Public Law 101–510 would prevent the base realignment and closure (BRAC) recommendations made by the 2005 BRAC Commission from taking effect.

BACKGROUND

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107–107) authorized the use of amended authorities and procedures contained within Public Law 101–510 to conduct a round of base realignments and closures in 2005. The 2005 BRAC round is the fifth round of base closures since 1988.

Pursuant to Public Law 107–107 and Public Law 101–510, on May 13, 2005, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld submitted to Congress and the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission a list of recommended base closure and realignment actions. The secretary's list comprised 190 recommendations, including 33 "major" closures ("major" installations were defined by the secretary as those with a plant replacement value exceeding $100 million), 29 "major" realignments, and 775 smaller closures and realignments. According to the BRAC commission, implementation of the secretary's recommendations would have resulted in net savings over 20 years of $47.8 billion, with annual savings after implementation of $5.4 billion.

On September 8, 2005, the commission submitted an amended list of BRAC recommendations to the President. Of the secretary's initial 190 recommendations, the commission approved 119 with no change and another 45 with amendments. The commission rejected 13 recommendations, significantly modified another 13, and made 5 additional closure or realignment recommendations. Of the secretary's recommended 33 major closures, the commission approved 21, changed 7 to realignments, and rejected the remaining 5. Of the secretary's recommended 29 major realignments, the commission approved 25, changed 1 to realignment, rejected the other 3, and added 1 not requested by the secretary.

According to the commission, the revised recommendations will result in 20 year savings of $35.6 billion over 20 years with annual savings of $4.2 billion. However, a large part of these savings would take the form of personnel becoming available to conduct other tasks. Discounting the personnel savings, the commission estimates that its recommendations will result in net savings of $15.1 billion over 20 years with annual savings after implementation of approximately $2.5 billion.

On September 15, 2005, the President concurred with the commission's recommendations and sent them to Congress for review [1]. Under the provisions of Public Law 101–510, the commission's recommendations will become binding unless a resolution of disapproval is enacted. The law specifies the text of the resolution of disapproval and does not permit additions, deletions, or amendments to the recommendations affecting installations on the BRAC list. Enactment of the resolution would require passage by both houses of Congress as well as approval by the President or a veto override.

Public Law 101–510 provides expedited procedures for congressional consideration of the resolution of disapproval. First, it provides for a limited period of time during which the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Armed Services may consider the resolution. Failure to act within this

[1] A complete copy of the report, as transmitted by the President on September 15, 2005, is available as House Document 109–56.

time period would result in the resolution being discharged from further consideration.

Second, on or after the third day after the committee has reported the resolution, or has been discharged from further consideration, any Member of Congress may move to proceed to the consideration of the resolution, after giving notice the preceding calendar day.

The commission recommendations will become binding unless the resolution is enacted before one of the following occurs: (1) the end of a 45–day period beginning on the date on which the President transmitted the commission's recommendations to Congress, but excluding any adjournment period of more than three days; or (2) the adjournment sine die of Congress for the session.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION

THE WHITE HOUSE,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D.C., Sept. 15, 2005.

Congress of the United States, Washington, DC.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES: I transmit herewith the report containing the recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission pursuant to sections 2903 and 2914 of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, Public Law 101–510, 104 Stat. 1810, as amended. That report includes changes referenced in errata sheets submitted to me by the Commission, including the enclosed errata sheets dated September 8, September 9, September 12, and September 13, 2005.

I note that I am in receipt of a letter from Chairman Principi, dated September 8, 2005, regarding a district court injunction then in effect relating to the Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Chairman Principi's letter states that, as a result of that injunction, "you should consider the portion of Recommendation 85 . . . that recommends realignment of the Connecticut 103rd Fighter Wing withdrawn from the Commission's report." The Chairman's letter further states that "[i]f the court's injunction is later vacated, reversed, stayed, or otherwise withdrawn, it is the intent of the Commission that the entirety of the recommendation be a part of the Commission's report." On September 9, 2005, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit granted a stay of the district court's injunction. Because the injunction is no longer in effect, Recommendation 85 in its entirety is part of the Commission's report.

I certify that I approve all the recommendations contained in the Commission's report.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
President.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

As noted above, H.J. Res. 65 was introduced on September 20, 2005, and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

On September 27, 2005, the Committee on Armed Services held a mark-up session to consider H.J. Res. 65. The committee reported adversely the resolution of disapproval by a record vote of 43 ayes to 14 noes.

COMMITTEE POSITION

On September 27, 2005, the Committee on Armed Services met in open session and, a quorum being present, reported adversely the resolution H.J. Res. 65 to the House by a vote of 43–14.

FISCAL DATA

Pursuant to clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee attempted to ascertain annual outlays resulting from the resolution during fiscal year 2005 and each of the following five fiscal years. The results of such efforts are reflected in the committee cost estimate, which is included in this report pursuant to clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATE

September 28, 2005.

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.J. Res. 65, Disapproving the Recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is David Newman.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN,
Director.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

H.J. Res. 65 would disapprove the recommendations of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, preventing the Department of Defense from implementing those recommendations. Enacting the joint resolution would not affect direct spending or revenues. It would significantly affect spending subject to appropriation—because implementation of the Commission's recommendations is likely to cost money in the near term, but save money over time. CBO has not prepared an estimate of such discretionary costs and savings; however, a summary of the Commission's estimates is included below.

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 set up a process by which military installations would be recommended for closure or realignment by an independent commission. The Department of Defense (DoD) would implement the recommendations unless the Congress were to enact a joint resolution disapproving them. Public Law 107–107, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, authorized a new round of base closures and realignments for 2005, the first time since 1995, and authorized the establishment of a commission to review recommendations from DoD and to submit a final list of recommended closures and realignments to the President of the United States.

On September 8, 2005, the Commission released its recommendations, which called for closing or realigning the activities at 182 in-

stallations. When measured in 2005 dollars, the Commission's analysis indicates that these actions would cost $5.5 billion over the 2006–2011 period, but would save $4.2 billion annually after that implementation period, assuming that appropriations are reduced accordingly. Over 20 years, the Commission estimates that DoD could save over $35 billion, including $20 billion in savings associated with eliminating some military personnel positions at closed installations. However, since DoD's current force structure plans do not include a reduction in military personnel, the Commission notes that these savings are unlikely to be realized, and estimates that actual savings would be about $15 billion over the 2006–2025 period.

The President concurred with the Commission's recommendations and transmitted them to the Congress on September 15, 2005. Under current law, if no action is taken by the Congress, DoD will begin closing and realigning the affected bases in 2006. Therefore, enactment of H.J. Res. 65 would cost money relative to current law because savings from the base closures would be forgone. All costs and savings related to those base closures and realignments would be subject to appropriation action. CBO has not prepared an independent estimate of the magnitude of the costs involved.

H.J. Res. 65 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is David Newman. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee generally concurs with the estimate contained in the report of the Congressional Budget Office.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee reports that the findings and recommendations of the committee, based on oversight activities pursuant to clause 2(b)(1) of rule X, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

With respect to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this resolution does not include any new spending or credit authority, nor does it provide for any increase or decrease in tax revenues or expenditures.

With respect to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, performance goals and objectives can not be explained, because the resolution does not require any new funding.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to Rule XIII, clause 3(d)(1) of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee finds the authority for this legislation in Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

STATEMENT OF FEDERAL MANDATES

Pursuant to section 423 of Public Law 104–4, this legislation contains no federal mandates with respect to state, local, and tribal governments, nor with respect to the private sector. Similarly, the resolution provides no unfunded federal intergovernmental mandates.

RECORD VOTES

In accordance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the committee sets forth the following record vote that occurred during the committee's consideration of H.J. Res. 65.

As previously noted, the committee ordered H.J. Res. 65 report to the House with an adverse recommendation by a vote of 43–14, a quorum being present.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
109TH CONGRESS
ROLL CALL

Motion to Report Adversely — Date: 09/27/05

H. J. Res. 65 — Offered by: Weldon

Voice Vote ____ Ayes ____ Nays

Rep.	Aye	Nay	Present	Rep.	Aye	Nay	Present
Mr. Hunter				Mr. Skelton	X		
Mr. Weldon	X			Mr. Spratt	X		
Mr. Hefley	X			Mr. Ortiz		X	
Mr. Saxton	X			Mr. Evans		X	
Mr. McHugh	X			Mr. Taylor		X	
Mr. Everett	X			Mr. Abercrombie		X	
Mr. Bartlett	X			Mr. Meehan	X		
Mr. McKeon	X			Mr. Reyes	X		
Mr. Thornberry	X			Dr. Snyder	X		
Mr. Hostettler		X		Mr. Smith	X		
Mr. Jones		X		Ms. Sanchez	X		
Mr. Ryun (KS)	X			Mr. McIntyre	X		
Mr. Gibbons	X			Ms. Tauscher		X	
Mr. Hayes	X			Mr. Brady			
Mr. Calvert	X			Mr. Andrews		X	
Mr. Simmons				Ms. Davis (CA)	X		
Mrs. Davis (VA)		X		Mr. Langevin	X		
Mr. Akin		X		Mr. Israel	X		
Mr. Forbes		X		Mr. Larsen	X		
Mr. Miller (FL)		X		Mr. Cooper		X	
Mr. Wilson	X			Mr. Marshall	X		
Mr. LoBiondo	X			Mr. Meek			
Mr. Bradley	X			Ms. Bordallo	X		
Mr. Turner	X			Mr. Ryan (OH)	X		
Mr. Kline	X			Mr. Udall	X		
Mrs. Miller (MI)	X			Mr. Butterfield	X		
Mr. Rogers	X			Ms. McKinney			
Mr. Franks	X			Mr. Boren	X		
Mr. Shuster	X						
Mrs. Drake		X					
Dr. Schwarz	X						
Ms. McMorris	X						
Mr. Conaway	X						
Mr. Davis (KY)	X						

Roll Call Vote Total:

43 Aye 14 Nay ____ Present

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

Although we differed in our positions on reporting H.J. Res. 65 adversely to the House, we share the belief that the 2005 base realignment and closure (BRAC) round must be the final time the current BRAC model is used to make closure and realignment decisions.

We submit the following examples of events that occurred during this BRAC round, within the parameters of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, to demonstrate our concerns with the existing process.

- Following release of the Secretary of Defense's BRAC recommendations, DOD was unprepared to release data that supported its recommendations. Citing security concerns, the Department's delays not only impacted the ability of Congress, local communities, and the commission to review the recommendations, but created the appearance that DOD was "slow rolling" to prevent the deconstruction of its recommendations.
- Some observers have noted that certain commission decisions appear to have been influenced by political pressures. The spectre of politics within the process raises legitimate concerns whether the BRAC process, particularly the use of a commission within the process, remains a viable one.
- The commission included an unprecedented number of "contingent" recommendations in its report. Some recommendations—such as for Cannon Air Force Base—created the appearance that commissioners were avoiding making difficult political decisions. Other recommendations—such as for Naval Air Station Oceana—make extraordinary demands on the local community. It is questionable whether this was an appropriate use of the commission's powers, and it was not our intent that the commission attempt to broker land acquisitions, build buffer zones, or force states into negotiations to keep their bases open.
- The commission placed extraordinary emphasis on the community impact of closures and realignments. Although community impact is one of the selection criteria, BRAC law clearly states that military value criteria are of greater priority. Such reordering of the criteria may result in infrastructure with less than optimum military value and raises questions about the commission's motivations.
- The commission's lack of organization raised questions about its credibility. For instance, decisions made by the commissioners during and after markup proceedings relating to Otis Air Force Base resulted in DOD, communities, and commissioners alike believing that the base had been closed. Instead, a later review of the amendments voted on revealed that

the base had been realigned. Such events diminish confidence in the commission's ability to conduct business in a professional manner.

While we do not agree whether such flaws are sufficient to warrant disapproval of the 2005 BRAC recommendations, each one heightens doubts about the credibility of the process.

Considering that credibility is the foundation upon which the BRAC process is built, its erosion is particularly worrisome. In fact, as a result, we believe that BRAC 2005 should be the final time our nation conducts base realignments and closures through the process as we know it today.

While we believe that further reductions of military infrastructure after the 2005 BRAC round would present an unacceptable risk to national security, we also recognize that there may be a desire to make further base closures or realignments in the distant future.

In such an event, we urge that Congress develop a new BRAC process that is able to make measured, apolitical, and transparent decisions while restoring its credibility. To do less—by relying again upon the current BRAC legislation, for instance—will surely result in recommendations in which the nation has no confidence and may also result in decisions that support political rather than national security interests.

JOEL HEFLEY.
SOLOMON P. ORTIZ.

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVE J. RANDY FORBES

I am writing to respectfully express my additional views in opposition to the BRAC process and to further explain my vote supporting H.J. Res. 65 (the Joint Resolution Disapproving the Recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission).

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have always viewed one of my responsibilities and one of my great honors to stand with and support the military leaders who defend and protect the United States of America every day. I am proud of them and grateful for their service. My vote in support of H.J. Res. 65 was a vote against the BRAC process and not a vote against the recommendations of our military leaders. If my vote would ultimately stop the realignments or closures deemed necessary by our military leaders, I would not support H.J. Res. 65. However, I am casting this vote to express my feeling that this BRAC process is wrong and in hopes that it will not occur again.

In any realignment or closure process there are winners and losers. In this case, the fourth congressional district of Virginia, which I represent, was a winner. In fact, my district fared quite well through the BRAC realignments, gaining almost 7,000 military positions and numerous other civilian support jobs. However, the process used was flawed.

This BRAC round was marketed to Congress and the American people with faulty and misleading estimates of savings that could be realized if the recommendations were implemented. The Department of Defense (DoD) originally claimed that the BRAC recommendations would save $47.8 billion over 20 years after the BRAC process was completed. These estimates were based, in part, on "savings" that were to be realized from personnel who would be eliminated due to bases being closed or units being realigned. However, the BRAC process does not eliminate personnel, only relocating personnel to other locations. These personnel would still be paid their salaries and benefits at their newly-assigned bases. So, the inflated BRAC savings were based on these faulty assessments. The actual savings from BRAC, based on the commission's recommendations, drop to $15.1 billion over 20 years. This is a considerably different figure than initially advertised and should cause some to think carefully before concluding that BRAC is a worthwhile endeavor. Many of us had argued this point when BRAC was first proposed. We are saddened that our fears were realized.

The savings issue becomes all the more important when considering how a wrong decision in BRAC could be all that more costly in the future. The BRAC process was accomplished before the Overseas Basing Commission Report and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) have been completed and fully digested by those ex-

perts who could make sound national security assessments and recommendations with such information. This is exactly the reverse of the way the process should work. The Overseas Basing Commission Report and the QDR should inform the BRAC process, not the other way around. I fear that in the not-too-distant future that these reports may indicate that the BRAC process has made the wrong determinations with respect to some base closures and realignments recommended in this round of BRAC. If this happens, it may be too late to change the BRAC recommendations and we may have to spend even more time and money to reestablish a base or capability that we thought was disposable in the BRAC analysis. In addition, and perhaps most frustrating, the BRAC process, as I predicted at the outset, has been too political and the assessment standards applied unequally to some regions and installations but not to others.

Finally, I take exception to the basic premise of the Base Realignment and Closure process that allows nine non-elected officials to make major strategic and irrevocable decisions regarding our military infrastructure. These appointed officials should not be allowed to overturn the decisions made by our uniformed and civilian military leaders to which we entrust our national security. Why nine individuals, some of whom have no military experience, are a better judge of our military needs than our elected officials and thousands of career professionals in the DoD makes no sense. We entrust the greatest fighting force the world has ever known to the hands of our military leaders everyday and ask them to protect that force and use it to defend and protect our country. I cannot support a process that then allows nine non-elected people who are politically appointed to tell those military leaders they are wrong and what they must do with their facilities. That is a role for Congress and should not be abdicated when so much is at stake.

The BRAC round completed in 2005 was untimely, overly political, and marketed with misleading figures. This BRAC round, in retrospect, may cause us to make irrevocable mistakes when more thorough analyses such as the Overseas Basing Commission Report and the QDR are taken into account. While it is tempting for a member of Congress who has gained much in the way of military personnel allocations through the BRAC process to ignore its faults, I am casting this vote in hopes that we will not use this process again in the future.

J. RANDY FORBES.

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVE CATHY McMORRIS

Mr. Chairman, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I would like to bring to the committee's attention a few key points as they pertain to the most recent Base Realignment and Closure Commission review of our nation's military installations.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the important role that Fairchild Air Force Base plays in our national security efforts. Fairchild is home to the 92nd Air Refueling Wing. It is located 10 miles west of Spokane, Washington, is a modern, multi-mission base that is home to one of the world's largest air-refueling winds and four co-located units. These units include Washington National Guard 141st Air Refueling Wing; the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency; the 336th Training Group that operates the Air Force's only survival school; and Air Combat Command 2nd Support Squadron.

I believe that the BRAC recommendations largely recognize the important military assets of Fairchild Air Force Base. However, I am concerned about the realignment of all eight Air National Guard (ANG) KC–135 Tankers from Washington's 141st Air Refueling Wing. Fairchild's active duty and Guard tankers continue to serve a number of important state and federal flying missions. Those missions include providing important mobility for our national air defense through refueling and providing the Governor of Washington and the region with emergency airlift capacity in the time of state and regional emergencies.

Furthermore, this realignment overlooks the critical role that the 141st ANG plays in ensuring the security of the Pacific Northwest and our nation. Air refueling tankers are vital assets in the rapid protection of forces around the world. With emerging security threats in the North Pacific, this is not the time to be reducing our mobility of air assets. Fairchild Tankers fly shorter distances to the Pacific Rim—arriving with more fuel in less time—making them a valuable part of our nation's national security efforts.

I am hopeful that the Department of Defense will reexamine the realignment of the eight ANG Tankers from Fairchild Air Force Base. This is critical due to their importance not only to our national defense, but also serve Washington State and the Pacific region in a strategic and crucial public safety capacity.

CATHY McMORRIS.

DISSENTING VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVE SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

I continue to have abiding concerns about the security of the Gulf of Mexico in light of the closure of the only two Naval Stations in the Gulf of Mexico. This concern extends beyond the fact that Naval Station Ingleside, located in my district, is to be closed as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

Sometimes we forget the importance of the Gulf of Mexico region. One third of the continental United States ocean coastline is located along the Gulf of Mexico compared to 40 percent along the East Coast and 27 percent along the West Coast. Further, 51 percent of U.S. refining capability is along the Gulf of Mexico compared to 17 percent and 11 percent along the west and east coasts respectively. Over 70 percent of all crude oil imports enter the U.S. through Gulf ports, where 8 of the top 10 ports (tonnage) are located. The vast majority of domestic oil and gas offshore production takes place in the Gulf of Mexico compared to practically none along the East Coast.

Up to this point, the military basing plan put forth by the Department of Defense and approved by the BRAC Commission will ensure that there will be an ongoing active Navy presence along the 1,900 miles of Atlantic Coast from Portsmouth, NH to Key West, FL, including 84 Navy vessels. At the same time, there will be ZERO Navy surface bases along the 1,550 miles of the Gulf of Mexico with ZERO vessels homeported in the region.

The U.S. Northern Command has indicated there is an acceptable level of risk to homeland defense in the Gulf of Mexico after closure of all surface naval facilities in the Gulf. NORTHCOM has also indicated that their actionable intelligence plays a key role in the posture of our homeland defense forces. While I have not yet obtained requested information on maritime patrol flight and steaming hours in the Gulf of Mexico compared to other regions of the continental United States, I have obtained information from the Department of Homeland Security and the Southern Command that cause me great concern about the Gulf region, whether it be homeland defense or security.

Additionally, one of the primary "feeder" areas for maritime threat to the Gulf Coast of the U.S. logically stems from Central and South America and Mexico. Since FY 2001, U.S. military maritime patrol in this area has dropped dramatically. In terms of days and hours of assets assigned to this operating area, Navy surface assets available for patrol have been reduced by 53 percent; U.S. Army air support for maritime patrol has been reduced by 72 percent; Navy maritime air patrol has shrunk by over 51 percent; and Air Force maritime patrol has dropped by 59 percent. If these trends continue, this critical area is going to be defended less, not

more, in this dangerous age. These statistics in and of themselves are alarming. However, when coupled with other statistics related specifically to our homeland defense strategy, it is very clear that the U.S. has a serious threat to its southern coast that is not adequately addressed or resourced.

Documented information from federal maritime commands operating in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean would seem to contradict the assertion that the Gulf is adequately protected without ANY surface operational naval base in the region. For example, of the criminal maritime traffic headed north towards the Gulf, 75 percent of activity known to exist from actionable intelligence is never detected—likely due to a lack of maritime patrol assets operating in the Gulf area. Of the detected hostile tracks, 25 percent are never intercepted. According to documentation, 84 percent of the time this failure is due to a lack of surface assets in the area.

With open source information clearly documenting the increasing number of people with terrorist ties illegally entering the Central and South American area, the history of established maritime smuggling routes, and the large concentration of national energy and food resources bordering the Gulf of Mexico region—common sense dictates that the Gulf of Mexico is a primary terrorist target and that planned basing decisions do not provide adequate security.

For these reasons I am compelled to strongly disagree with the BRAC recommendations and support House Joint Resolution 65. We must ensure the Gulf of Mexico, and particularly the Western Gulf, is not left vulnerable to terrorist attack due to inadequate homeland defense and security coordination and mission planning. Our citizens along the Southern coast of the United States deserve the same level of protection as those living along the east and west coasts.

SOLOMON P. ORTIZ.

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