

Chapter 5

Closure and Realignment Recommendations of the Commission

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission has completed its review and analysis of the Department of Defense recommendations for base closures and realignments, as transmitted to the Commission on April 12, 1991, by the Secretary of Defense. This chapter contains the recommendations made by this Commission.

In recommending to the services where to move their units, missions, or forces, the Commission recognizes that the military must retain some flexibility. The force-structure plan itself is not a rigid document because it reflects a world that is changing rapidly.

Aside from recommendations on the status of particular bases, the Commission also made two general recommendations.

First, the Commission observed, it is DoD policy to operate military hospitals primarily to support active-duty military personnel. Congress established the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) to care for the medical needs of non-active-duty beneficiaries. Closures of military hospitals normally follow closures of bases with active-duty populations served by those hospitals, with CHAMPUS covering the beneficiaries in that area. In addition, assignments of active-duty health-care specialists are tied directly to support of active-duty forces. The Commission recommends that DoD confer with Congress regarding these policies and report to the Commission in time for the 1993 Base Closure and Realignment Commission to consider the issue of hospital closures.

Second, with the closure of bases bearing the names of American heroes such as President Benjamin Harrison; General Ira C. Eaker; astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom; and World War I pilot, Eddie Rickenbacker, the Commission urges the President to find some other means to honor the contributions of these great Americans.

Detailed information on each of the Commission's base-closure-and-realignment decisions is presented below, including the

rationale for each recommendation. Substantial deviations from the application of the force-structure plan and the final criteria have been identified where applicable.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Category: Corps of Engineers
Mission: Military and Civil Works
Cost to Close: \$266 million
Savings: 1992-97: \$238 million;
Annual: \$112 million
Payback: 2 years

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Consider reorganization of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under legislation separate from that which established the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (Public Law 101-510). The Corps of Engineers conducted a reorganization study and submitted it as a part of the Department of the Army's recommendation to DoD. The Secretary of Defense removed the Corps of Engineers from his submission to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The communities argued that the study had not been properly reviewed by congressional committees charged with oversight of the Corps of Engineers. They also argued that reducing the number of divisions from ten to six had no rational foundation and that the boundaries that describe these new divisions and districts were not determined in a consistent manner. The communities stated that the great distances between these new divisions and district headquarters and their

respective field offices would create inefficiencies.

Finally, the communities argued that the proposed realignment would have a significant impact on the local economies and regions.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission found that the Corps of Engineers reorganization plan is based on a business-like approach. It combines like functions at the division level where area coverage can be provided, thus relieving the districts of some of their administrative functions. The number of divisions selected was based on four options. Each option considered command-and-control factors and balanced the workload. The boundaries for the new divisions were based on watershed locations and optimizing customer support. The selection of division headquarters was based solely on the ranking of existing headquarters. The number of districts and their headquarters were based primarily on their military ranking and their civil works rankings. In some cases, selections did not follow the rankings to account for needed geographic dispersion and unique capabilities.

The Commission found that the unemployment impacts would increase by no more than two percentage points in any one area; however, these rates are independent of any other action that may be occurring in the respective areas. The implementation costs may be overstated because it is not known exactly how many personnel will elect to retire or quit as opposed to relocating.

The Commission also found that 6,600 authorized positions would be transferred and an additional 2,600 authorized positions would be eliminated. This represents approximately 22 percent of the Corps of Engineers total work force and 47 percent of the work force available for reorganization.

These transfers and eliminations occur at the district and division levels. Four division