

# CHAPTER 4

## PREVIOUS BASE CLOSURE ROUNDS

### HISTORY OF BASE CLOSURE

Closing military installations has always been a difficult process. Whether closures are designed to reduce military overhead, enhance readiness and modernization, or reflect the realities of changing international threats, the impact of these decisions on local communities can be dramatic and painful. Additionally, the decision-making process itself has had a controversial history, punctuated with accusations of political interference and retribution.

In the early 1960's, President Kennedy concluded that the large defense base structure developed during World War II and the Korean conflict was no longer necessary. At the President's direction, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara developed and implemented a base closure program. The criteria governing the selection process were established primarily within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, with minimal consultation with the military departments or Congress. Hundreds of bases closures and realignments took place during this period, and more than 60 major bases were closed. Despite these accomplishments, charges that base closures were used by the Executive Branch to punish uncooperative legislators were prevalent.

In 1965, Congress passed legislation setting up reporting requirements designed to involve itself in any DoD base closure program. The legislation was vetoed by President Johnson, further exacerbating the growing confrontation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of government. Despite this antagonistic situation, the Department of Defense was able to complete base realignments and closures routinely throughout the 1960's.

During the 1970's, however, DoD found it increasingly difficult to realign or close installations due to continued attempts by Congress to regulate the base closure process and to limit or deny base closure funding. In 1976, the Military Construction

Authorization Bill contained a provision prohibiting any base closure or reduction of more than 250 civilian employees until the Department had notified Congress of the proposed actions, assessed the personnel and economic impacts, followed the study provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and waited nine months. This bill was vetoed by President Ford, and the Congressional veto override effort failed.

An important turning point in the struggle between Congress and the Executive Branch occurred in 1977. In that year, Congress succeeded in enacting legislation which severely restricted DoD's ability to close military bases. This statute—Title 10, United States Code, Section 2687—required the Department of Defense to notify Congress if an installation became a closure or realignment candidate. The law also subjected all proposed closure actions to the lengthy environmental evaluation requirements of the NEPA process, as well as to local economic and strategic consequence reports. In addition, DoD was required to wait 60 days for Congress to respond to its recommendations. These and other procedural requirements established in Section 2687, combined with Congressional reluctance to close military bases, effectively halted base closures (Section 2687 appears in Appendix C of this Report).

For a decade following the passage of Section 2687, all attempts at closing major installations failed, and proposed realignments of small military units were often thwarted. At the same time, the 1980's witnessed a dramatic increase in defense spending and rapid military expansion, reaching its peak in 1985. As the defense budget declined in subsequent years, the size of the U.S. armed forces changed, yet the base structure remained unaltered. As a result, readiness was being threatened as the services struggled to pay the operating costs of unneeded bases and infrastructure.

## THE 1988 COMMISSION

By 1988, the Defense budget had declined for three straight years and was predicted to decline further. To ensure that scarce DoD resources would be devoted to the most pressing operational and investment needs rather than maintaining unneeded property, facilities, or overhead, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci chartered the Defense Secretary's Commission on Base Realignment and Closure on May 3, 1988 (See Appendix D). The Commission sought to close obsolete military bases and bring the base structure in line with the declining force structure. Enacted into law in October, 1988, Public Law 100-526 provided the statutory basis for this one-time approach. The law also provided relief from certain statutory impediments to closures, such as a partial exemption from NEPA, delegated property disposal authority, and an expedited process for Congressional review of BRAC recommendations (Public Law 100-526 appears in Appendix E).

The 1988 Commission was co-chaired by former Senator Abraham Ribicoff and former Congressman Jack Edwards. Other commissioners appointed by the Secretary of Defense were Louis W. Cabot; W. Graham Clayton, Jr.; Donald F. Craib, Jr.; Thomas F. Eagleton; Martin R. Hoffmann; Bryce Poe II; William H. Rowden; James C. Smith II; Donn A. Starry; and Russell E. Train. The 1988 Commission issued its report on December 29, 1988. It recommended the closure of 86 military facilities and the realignment of 59 others, with an estimated savings of \$693.6 million annually. The 1988 Commission's recommendations represented a reduction of approximately 3 percent of the domestic base structure. The 1988 Commission's authority expired after the submission of its final report (a complete list of the 1988 recommendations are contained in Appendix L on a state-by-state basis, and in Appendix M by military service).

Major base closure and realignment recommendations of the 1988 Commission include:

### 16 CLOSURES

George Air Force Base, CA  
Mather Air Force Base, CA  
Norton Air Force Base, CA  
Presidio of San Francisco, CA  
Chanute Air Force Base, IL  
Fort Sheridan, IL  
Jefferson Proving Ground, IN

Lexington Bluegrass Army Depot, KY  
Naval Station Lake Charles, LA  
Army Material Tech Lab, MA  
Pease Air Force Base, NH  
Naval Station Brooklyn, NY  
Philadelphia Naval Hospital, PA  
Naval Station Galveston, TX  
Fort Douglas, UT  
Cameron Station, VA

### 11 REALIGNMENTS

Fort Huachuca, AZ  
Pueblo Army Depot, CO  
Fort McPherson, GA  
Fort Devens, MA  
Fort Holabird, MD  
Fort Meade, MD  
Fort Dix, NJ  
Fort Monmouth, NJ  
Umatilla Army Depot, OR  
Fort Bliss, TX  
Naval Station Puget Sound, WA

Public Law 100-526 required Secretary Carlucci to accept or reject the 1988 Commission's recommendations in its entirety. In January, 1989, he accepted all of the recommendations. The law provided Congress with the same accept or reject in full option. In May, 1989, the Congressional review period expired without the enactment of a joint resolution of disapproval. As a result, the Commission's 1988 recommendations went into effect and have the force of law.

Implementation of the 1988 Commission's recommendations was required to start by January, 1990, and to be completed by October, 1995. As of June, 1995, 14 of the 16 installations recommended for closure have been closed.

Enactment of P.L. 100-526 constituted a recognition that consolidation in the military basing structure could be a way to realize savings in the defense budget, while not impairing the ability of the armed forces to carry out their missions. Although designed to break the stalemate and balance the prerogatives of the two branches of government, the Congressional response was reminiscent of the base closing activities of the early 1960's. Congressional critics claimed that the list unfairly targeted districts represented by certain members of Congress. The 1988 Commission was appointed by, and reported directly to, the Secretary of Defense.

It generated its own list of recommended closures and realignments. All hearings and votes were conducted in closed sessions. Little information about how the Commission arrived at its recommendations was made available to the public.

### CHANGING WORLD SITUATION

The end of the Cold War fundamentally altered the international political landscape. The late 1980's and early 1990's saw the fall of the Berlin Wall, the demise of the Warsaw Pact, and the breakup of the Soviet Union. These events dramatically changed U.S. military requirements. It became clear that our national defense posture could be strengthened, and costs reduced, through a more efficient military base structure. At the same time, the rapidly growing national debt became an increasingly urgent political issue. Thus, base closures and realignments became a part of each military department's budget strategy for balancing their base structure with their declining force structure.

Public Law 100-526, however, established a one-time only Commission, which expired on December 31, 1988. Consequently, closing bases was once again governed by the procedures mandated by Section 2687 of Title 10, United States Code—procedures that had prevented base closures for over a decade.

To address the problem of excess infrastructure, in January, 1990, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney unilaterally proposed the closure of 35 additional bases and the realignment or reduction of forces at more than 20 other bases. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, however, had failed to provide specific written guidance to the military services and defense agencies on how to evaluate bases for possible closure or realignment. The services, consequently, all used different processes to come up with their recommendations.

As in the past, the 1990 recommendations submitted by Secretary Cheney were met with Congressional protests that the list was politically influenced. And, as in the past, Congress was criticized for being institutionally incapable of making decisions that were good for the country but painful for some congressional districts. Recognizing the need to further reduce the defense base structure, and to ensure a fair process, Congress passed the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Title XXIX of Public Law 101-510).

This law effectively halted all closures based on the Secretary's January, 1990, list and required new procedures for closing or realigning bases. (Title XXIX of P.L. 101-510, as amended, appears in Appendix F).

### P.L. 101-510: THE DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

Signed by President Bush on November 5, 1990, P.L. 101-510 created an independent, five-year Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (DBCRC) with closure rounds in 1991, 1993, and 1995. The act outlines procedures, roles, and time lines for the President, Congress, Department of Defense, General Accounting Office, and the Commission to follow.

The 1990 legislation required that all bases be compared equally against the Department of Defense's current force-structure plan and Congressionally approved selection criteria. For each of the three DBCRC rounds, the services and DoD agencies submit their candidates for closure and realignment to the Secretary of Defense for his review. After reviewing service candidates, the Secretary submits his recommendations to DBCRC for its review.

The Commission has four months to scrutinize and analyze the Secretary's recommendations. In addition, the Commission possesses the authority to add, delete, or modify the Secretary's list. On July 1, the Commission submits its report with recommendations to the President for his consideration. The President has 15 days to either accept or reject the Commission's recommendations in their entirety; if he rejects them, the Commission can give the President a revised list of recommendations. If the President accepts the Commission's recommendations, he forwards the list to the Congress. The law provides Congress with only two options: do nothing and accept the list, or reject it in full by passing a joint resolution of disapproval. If such a resolution is passed by both Houses of Congress, it would be subject to a veto by the President. In the absence of a joint resolution of disapproval, the Commission's recommendations have the force of law.

The DBCRC was created "to provide a fair process that will result in the timely closure and realignment of military installations inside the United States." Established as an independent Presidential Commission, lawmakers intended DBCRC to be a

model of open government. Public Law 101-510 required each Commission to conduct public hearings on the Secretary of Defense's list of closures and realignments and on any proposed changes to those recommendations. In addition, its records are open to public scrutiny.

Procedurally, the 1988 DoD Commission and the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission differ substantially. The 1988 Commission, working for the Secretary of Defense, generated its own list of recommended closures and realignments. Under the current law, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission independently reviews and analyzes the Secretary of Defense's recommendations and submits its findings and recommendations directly to the President. To ensure an independent process, the law requires the General Accounting Office (GAO) to provide the Commission a detailed analysis of the Secretary of Defense's recommendations and selection process. The GAO also assists the Commission in its analysis of the Secretary's recommendations.

The process by which the DBCRC operates is also uniquely open and insulated from partisan politics. The Commission meets only during the non-election years of 1991, 1993, and 1995. All meetings and hearings are open to the public. The DBCRC provides numerous opportunities to receive testimony and viewpoints from interested parties, as well as community and Congressional leaders. Transcripts of hearings, correspondence, and other data received by the Commission are available for public review. Every major site proposed for closure is visited by at least one commissioner, in order to gain a first-hand look at the installations, as well as to provide the public with an opportunity to explain the economic and other impacts a closure would have on the local community.

## THE 1991 COMMISSION

As provided in the statute, the DBCRC consists of eight members appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. In selecting individuals to be nominated for membership on the Commission, the President is directed to consult with the Speaker of the House of Representatives concerning the appointment of two members, the majority leader of the Senate concerning the appointment of an additional two members, and the minority leaders of both Chambers for one member each. The final two appointments are made independently by the President.

The 1991 Commission was chaired by former Representative Jim Courter. Other commissioners were William L. Ball III; Howard H. Callaway; General Duane H. Cassidy, USAF (ret.); Arthur Levitt, Jr.; James C. Smith II; Robert D. Stuart, Jr.; and Alexander B. Trowbridge (Commissioner Trowbridge resigned from the Commission on May 17, 1991).

The Commission received Secretary of Defense Cheney's recommendations on April 12, 1991. It held 47 base visits, 14 regional hearings, and 9 investigative hearings in Washington, D.C. The Commission sent its report to the President on July 1, 1991, recommending the closure of 34 bases and the realignment of 48 others. These actions generated an estimated FY 1992-1997 net savings of \$2.3 billion and recurring savings of \$1.5 billion annually after a one-time cost of \$4.1 billion. This represented a reduction of approximately 5.4 percent of the domestic base structure.

The President accepted all of the Commission's recommendations on July 11, 1991, and forwarded the Commission's report with his approval to the Congress. On July 30, 1991, by a vote of 60 to 364, the House rejected a resolution of disapproval. Consequently, the recommendations of the 1991 Commission have the force of law.

Major base closures and realignments of the 1991 Commission include:

### 26 CLOSURES

Eaker Air Force Base, AR  
Williams Air Force Base, AZ  
Castle Air Force Base, CA  
Fort Ord, CA  
Hunters Point Annex, CA  
Moffett Naval Air Station, CA  
Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center, San Diego, CA  
Naval Station Long Beach, CA  
Sacramento Army Depot, CA  
Tustin Marine Corps Air Station, CA  
Lowry Air Force Base, CO  
Fort Ben Harrison, IN  
Grissom Air Force Base, IN  
England Air Force Base, LA  
Fort Devens, MA  
Loring Air Force Base, ME  
Wurtsmith Air Force Base, MI  
Richards-Gebaur Air Reserve Station, MO  
Rickenbacker Air Guard Base, OH  
Naval Station Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, PA  
Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, SC  
Bergstrom Air Force Base, TX  
Carswell Air Force Base, TX  
Chase Field Naval Air Station, TX  
Naval Station Puget Sound, WA

## 19 REALIGNMENTS

Fort Chaffee, AR  
Beale Air Force Base, CA  
Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, CA  
Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, CA  
Naval Coastal Systems Center, Panama City, FL  
MacDill Air Force Base, FL  
Rock Island Arsenal, IL  
Naval Avionics Center, Indianapolis, IN  
Naval Weapons Support Center, Crane, IN  
Naval Ordnance Station, Louisville, KY  
Fort Polk, LA  
Naval Ordnance Station, Indian Head, MD  
Naval Surface Weapons Center, White Oaks, MD  
Aviation Systems Command/Troop Support  
Command, MO  
Letterkenny Army Depot, PA  
Naval Air Development Center, Warminster, PA  
Naval Air Engineering Center, Lakehurst, NJ  
Naval Air Propulsion Center, Trenton, NJ  
Naval Undersea Warfare Engineering Station,  
Keyport, WA

The 1991 closures and recommendations were required to begin in July, 1993 and must be completed by July, 1997. As of June, 1995, 19 of the 26 major installations have been closed and two more are scheduled for closure by the end of FY 1995 (a complete list of the 1991 recommendations is contained in Appendix L on a state-by-state basis, and in Appendix M by military service).

## THE 1993 COMMISSION

The second Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to operate under P.L. 101-510 was again chaired by former Representative Jim Courter, the 1991 Commission chair. Other commissioners included Captain Peter B. Bowman, USN (ret.); Beverly B. Byron; Rebecca G. Cox; General Hansford T. Johnson, USAF (ret.); Arthur Levitt, Jr.; Harry C. McPherson, Jr.; and Robert D. Stuart, Jr. (Commissioner Levitt, who also served as a commissioner during the 1991 round, resigned from the Commission on May 4, 1993, following his appointment by President Bill Clinton to be

Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission).

The Commission received Secretary of Defense Aspin's recommendations for base closures and realignments on March 12, 1993. The Commission held 125 base visits, 17 regional hearings, and 16 investigative hearings in Washington, D.C. It submitted its report to the President on July 1, 1993, recommending the closure of 130 bases and the realignment of 45 others. Estimated FY 1994-1999 net savings was approximately \$3.8 billion after one-time costs of approximately \$7.43 billion. The savings from these actions are estimated to total approximately \$2.33 billion annually. These approved closures and realignments represent a further reduction of approximately 6.2 percent of the domestic base structure.

Major base closures and realignments of the 1993 Commission include:

## 28 CLOSURES

Naval Station Mobile, AL  
Mare Island Naval Shipyard, CA  
Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, CA  
Naval Air Station Alameda, CA  
Naval Aviation Depot Alameda, CA  
Naval Hospital Oakland, CA  
Naval Station Treasure Island, CA  
Naval Training Center San Diego, CA  
Homestead Air Force Base, FL  
Naval Air Station Cecil Field, FL  
Naval Aviation Depot Pensacola, FL  
Naval Training Center Orlando, FL  
Naval Air Station Agana, GU  
Naval Air Station Barbers Point, HI  
Naval Air Station Glenview, IL  
O'Hare International Airport Air Reserve  
Station, IL  
Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center,  
St. Inigoes, MD  
K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, MI  
Naval Station Staten Island, NY  
Plattsburgh Air Force Base, NY  
Defense Electronics Supply Center, OH  
Newark Air Force Base, OH  
Defense Clothing Factory, PA  
Charleston Naval Shipyard, SC  
Naval Station Charleston, SC  
Naval Air Station Dallas, TX  
Naval Aviation Depot Norfolk, VA  
Vint Hill Farms, VA

### 13 REALIGNMENTS

Anniston Army Depot, AL  
March Air Force Base, CA  
Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, CA  
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, CA  
Letterkenny Army Depot, PA  
Naval Surface Warfare Center (Dahlgren)  
White Oak Detachment, White Oak, MD  
Griffiss Air Force Base, NY  
Fort Monmouth, NJ  
Naval Education and Training Center, Newport, RI  
Naval Air Station Memphis, TN  
Ogden Air Logistics Center, Hill Air Force Base, UT  
Tooele Army Depot, UT  
Fort Belvoir, VA

The President accepted all of the Commission's recommendations on July 2, 1993, and forwarded the Commission's report with his approval to the Congress. On September 20, 1993, by a vote of 12-83, the Senate rejected a resolution of disapproval of the Commission's recommendations. Consequently, the recommendations of the 1993 Commission have the force of law. The 1993 recommendations are required to begin by July, 1995, and must be completed by July, 1999. As of June 1995, four of the 1993 major closures have occurred, and another four are scheduled for closure by the end of FY 1995 (a complete list of the 1993 Commission's recommendations are contained in Appendix L on a state-by-state basis, and in Appendix M by military service).