

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 21, 2003

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

As outlined in Public Law 107-107, the Secretary of Defense is expected to publish in the Federal Register and transmit to the congressional defense committees initial selection criteria for BRAC 2005 by December 31, 2003. We are aware that in accordance with your November 15, 2002 memo, the Chair of the Infrastructure Steering Group is tasked with providing the detailed direction necessary to conduct the BRAC 2005 analyses, including the drafting of those criteria.

As the Department drafts the initial selection criteria, we ask that you consider the following critical aspects of military value:

**Service-unique Functions.** Some functions at our military bases are so service-specific that they fall outside the broad definition of "jointness" and therefore should be kept within the respective service. For example, nuclear powered warships and related support functions are uniquely naval in character. Credit should be given to those installations with the organic ability to provide joint support to platforms outside their service in addition to the service-unique functions that make their military value high.

**Critical Trade Skills.** In numerous military construction and maintenance occupations, particularly those tied to naval nuclear propulsion, it can take six to eight years to develop requisite skills and competencies. Today in some of these critical occupations, the workforce is at or below critical mass and must be protected. While temporary assignments away from home are commonplace and an accepted aspect of mission support, permanent relocation efforts have never been successful. Indeed, targeted movement of critical trade skills must be carefully weighed considering that the workforce in these skills is often the most established and therefore the least willing to relocate. Additionally, in past analyses, military value was based on the skill sets available to perform the assigned mission rather than what these skill sets could perform if the scope of the mission was expanded. We maintain that installations with a workforce of critical trade skills have high military value based on missions they are capable of supporting beyond those currently assigned or historically performed.

Demonstrated Ability to Transform. Installations with a demonstrated ability to reorient themselves to new missions provide the nation with the greatest military value over time. This ability to adapt and embrace change is a function of the culture of the workforce. Installations with a culture predisposed to change and continually reinventing themselves to provide more effective and efficient operations have high military value.

Irreplaceable Properties and Facilities. The nation has numerous irreplaceable defense assets. These include installations with piers, drydocks, airspace and ranges that once lost, cannot be recovered without considerable cost and effort. Among these are the naval shipyards, which are geographically situated in four of our Nation's natural deep-water seaports for optimum effectiveness and strategic purposes. Installations with irreplaceable properties and facilities have high military value.

Licenses and Permits. Consideration must be given to the difficulty of relocating missions and functions requiring stringent Federal licensing or permitting requirements. Among these are the non-transferable environmental permits and nuclear license held by naval shipyards. The loss of such permits or licenses translates into the loss of capability and capacity, and may result in a significant vulnerability in national defense.

These are only a few of the key elements of military value that, collectively, we believe must be addressed as you develop the initial selection criteria for BRAC 2005. Should you require further information or wish to discuss these items, please contact our respective offices. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

