

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 21, 2010

The Honorable John McHugh  
Secretary of the Army  
Room 3E700 Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310-0101

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience regarding our concerns surrounding the pending closure of Ft. Monmouth and the impact of that closure on both the Army and New Jersey. Our concerns span a range of issues—from ensuring that deployed troops get the support they need to meeting the needs of military retirees and veterans living in New Jersey. We are taking the opportunity to put those expressed concerns in writing so that we maintain a common frame of reference as we work together to resolve these issues. In brief, we would like to discuss:

- The possibility of a proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the Army and the New Jersey Technology Solutions Center to provide support to Army communications and intelligence programs during and after the transition to Aberdeen Proving Ground;
- The possible conveyance of the McAfee Center on the Fort Monmouth property to the State of New Jersey or a suitable New Jersey non-profit entity;
- The possibility of the creation of a joint DoD-Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility at the current Patterson Army Health Clinic that can meet the needs of military retirees, their dependents, and veterans; and
- The possibility of maintaining the commissary and post exchange in operation on the Fort Monmouth property for the benefit of military retirees and their dependents.

As we have previously stated, our greatest concern is ensuring that the Army maintains the ability to continue to provide the intelligence and communications support that is essential to the survival of our troops on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. When the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission issued its final report in August 2005, it attached a caveat to its recommendation that Fort Monmouth be closed. Specifically, the Commission required that with regard to the Fort Monmouth closure decision, "the Secretary of Defense shall submit a report to the Congressional

Committees of Jurisdiction that movement of organizations, functions or activities from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground will be accomplished without disruption of their support for the Global War on Terror."

In late December 2007, after a hearing held by the House Committee on Armed Services, the Department of Defense (DoD) published this BRAC Commission-mandated report. Subsequently, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) agreed to audit the DOD report as part of its ongoing analysis of the BRAC process. In August 2008, the GAO released the results of their audit, which found that the DoD report "does not explain how key conclusions were drawn, particularly that the transfer could be completed without affecting their support for the Global War on Terror and other critical contingency operations", a conclusion we found deeply troubling.

The August 2008 GAO report on the Ft. Monmouth closure validated the concerns we have raised since the beginning of the BRAC process, specifically that the Fort Monmouth closure cannot proceed without detrimentally affecting command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) support to our troops deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

By the date of Fort Monmouth's expected closure (Sep. 15, 2011), the GAO forecasts that the Army will have at least 2,200 C4ISR personnel vacancies, or nearly half of the current C4ISR workforce. The GAO found that the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) will not be able to meet Fort Monmouth staffing levels until at least 2014, and possibly as late as 2016, five years after the projected date of the closure. Furthermore, these new employees will not achieve their maximum productivity and effectiveness for an additional three to eight years. This means a fully staffed and trained workforce won't exist at Aberdeen until 2024, 13 years after the move from Fort Monmouth. We should note that this is precisely what happened after the closure of Vint Hill Farms in the wake of the 1993 BRAC cycle; it took years for the Army C4ISR community to reconstitute its workforce in the wake of that closure and move.

In light of these findings, we believe that the Army will not be able maintain the current level of C4ISR support to American troops deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world unless a fully trained and experienced C4ISR workforce remains available to the Army for the foreseeable future. Fortunately, the state of New Jersey has developed a viable means to achieve that goal—but the Army Material Command (AMC) has yet to take the steps necessary to make this alternative operational.

For more than a year, we and state officials have tried without success to get the AMC to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the newly-formed New Jersey Technology Solutions Center (NJTSC) that would ensure workforce stability and mission continuity during the transition to Aberdeen. We are concerned that it may take years for any new hires to gain the experience and understanding of the C4ISR systems, programs, and policies that Fort Monmouth's current workforce possesses, which could adversely affect ongoing support for our military operations. New Jersey's NJTSC option would provide the Army with the ability to contract for necessary services and support during

the transition by utilizing those Fort Monmouth workers who will not move to APG. We ask that you consider the proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the NJTSC to ensure C4ISR mission continuity for our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world.

In a related vein, we ask you to consider our request that the McAfee Center on the Ft. Monmouth property be conveyed to the State of New Jersey or a suitable New Jersey non-profit entity once the Army no longer needs the facility. The McAfee Center is the hub of the Army's C4ISR infrastructure; its labs and related facilities should continue to be available to the Army and other federal agencies involved in C4ISR, cyber security, and related activities. Conveyance of the McAfee Center to New Jersey would help ensure those facilities continue to be used for critical defense, intelligence, and homeland security projects for years to come, as well as assisting the state of New Jersey with its economic recovery efforts.

Additionally, the needs of military retirees and veterans who have relied on Ft. Monmouth's medical and recreational facilities must continue to be met after the fort's closure. The Department of Veterans Affairs has assured us that they intend to continue operating a community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) in Monmouth County after the fort closes in 2011. Currently, the VA CBOC is housed on a floor of the Patterson Army Health Clinic. We believe that keeping this facility in its current location makes sense not only for DoD and VA, but also for the thousands of veterans, military retirees and their dependents that currently use the facility. To that end, we request that you work with Secretary Shinseki and us to explore the possibility of keeping this facility open in its current form. Absent that alternative, we would like to examine the possibility of establishing a new, conveniently located joint facility to help serve the military retirees and they deserve easy access to the health care they earned through their service. The VA has committed to involving local veterans in the process of developing alternative locations for this facility; however, we request the Army do whatever necessary to ensure the current facility be made available for this purpose.

Finally, the New Jersey chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) has asked that the commissary and post exchange continue in operation to serve the military retiree community after the fort closes. We understand that the Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) is the final authority regarding the status of the commissary, and we ask that you consider recommending to DECA that they keep the facilities under their jurisdiction on the Monmouth property in operation after the fort's closure.

We thank you for your service to our nation, and we look forward to meeting with you to discuss these and other issues.

Sincerely,

  
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG  
United States Senator

  
ROBERT MEMENDEZ  
United States Senator

  
RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress

  
FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress