

Thank you for joining us here today to examine the Army's plans for implementation of the recommendations of the BRAC Commission and how they will affect Northern Virginia, the Metropolitan, D.C. area, and the Army's ability to accomplish its mission.

Since 1988, the BRAC Commission and the BRAC process have served as the mechanism to realign military installations to match the challenges of an evolving world. The four previous BRAC rounds -- in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 -- brought about 97 major closures, 55 major realignments, and 235 minor actions. Overall, DoD claims the previous BRAC rounds saved American taxpayers around \$18 billion through fiscal 2001 and a further \$7 billion per year since. However, the 2005 BRAC recommendations represent the most extensive BRAC ever proposed, affecting more than 800 installations. DoD claims BRAC 2005 will cut excess military infrastructure between 5 and 11 percent and save \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

As part of the 2005 process, the Department of Defense made numerous recommendations to the BRAC Commission regarding activities in the Metropolitan D.C. area. Many of these could be characterized as part of a concerted effort to move DoD functions from leased office space to military posts. The main rationale was that leased space did not meet the Army's rigid force protection standards.

Along with my colleague Jim Moran, who joins me here today, as well as Senators Warner and Allen, I argued vigorously against the Army's BRAC recommendations. I also voted to disapprove the Commission's final recommendations.

I felt that the Department of Defense was using the BRAC process as a vehicle to advance an unrelated policy goal -- namely, moving out of leased space. I also felt that the entire BRAC process looked at these issues solely from a DoD perspective. There was little coordination with other agencies regarding the impacts of these moves.

For Northern Virginia, the final result of the 2005 BRAC round is that 23,000 personnel, a force the size of the Pentagon, will be relocating to Fort Belvoir by 2011.

In the BRAC game, the conventional wisdom has always been that those who saved or gained jobs won and those who lost jobs -- lost. The jobs coming to Fort Belvoir are very desirable -- high skilled, high paying jobs with considerable economic spin-off. That will be of little consolation if the trade-off for these jobs is chaos on our roadways.

Unfortunately, I fear that is where we are headed.

Yesterday's *Washington Post* reported that the Washington, D.C. region already has the second longest average commute in the country. Without proper planning and execution, the influx of traffic to Fort Belvoir could lead to the collapse of the transportation infrastructure along the I-95 corridor, making the situation even worse.

In February, the Army awarded a \$60 million contract for master planning services at Fort Belvoir to handle BRAC-related issues. As part of this process, the Army also

formed a board of advisors, comprised of federal, state, and local stakeholders to discuss issues and concerns regarding BRAC implementation at Fort Belvoir.

On July 28, the Army announced its initial plan to site military activities on the fort. This plan involves locating 18,000 personnel on the Engineering Proving Ground, a former live-fire range located on the western side of I-95. The remainder will be located on the main post, located off Route 1.

The Army also announced its intention to locate the National Army Museum on the western portion of the Engineering Proving Ground. Before the BRAC process, the museum had been planned for the main post. I would note that the museum is not part of the BRAC process.

Finally, the Army intends to build a new hospital to replace the aging Dewitt Hospital on the main post. This hospital will also host some of the services formerly provided at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The Army's plans raise a number of concerns, foremost among them the effect they would have on regional traffic. Just how does the Army propose to handle an estimated 15,000 extra car trips per day?

The Army's answer is a number of transportation projects, 14 of which they characterize as "required." These include the completion of the Fairfax County Parkway, widening of I-95, and new access ramps to EPG.

However, only three of these projects – the completion of the Fairfax County Parkway; widening I-95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Rte. 123; and the Woodlawn Road replacement -- are even partially funded. The completion of the Fairfax County Parkway was once considered to be fully funded; however, that is now doubtful since a dispute regarding environmental concerns has delayed construction for years.

So the question is: Who is going to pay for these projects? Only two are in Virginia's six year plan. Only two are included in the most recent Transportation Reauthorization bill – the next version of which won't be enacted until 2010, at the earliest.

Unless the Army plans to spend the money to fund these projects, which it estimates to cost \$626 million, it is foreseeable that little, if any, new transportation infrastructure will be in place before 23,000 new people report to Fort Belvoir.

Not to add insult to injury, but this figure does not account for the private industry that is likely to also move to the area along with the agencies they serve.

That is unacceptable.

The Department of Defense got what it asked for from the BRAC Commission; now it must figure out how to put those pieces in place in only five years. Those with experience

with large projects will tell you this is very little time. A concern is that the short term imperative of the deadline is outweighing long term considerations.

It could be likened to a two minute drill in a football game, when caution is thrown to the wind in the desperate hope of beating the clock.

A case in point: the federal government currently owns a General Services Administration warehouse facility in Springfield, just north of the EPG and adjacent to Interstate 95 and the Springfield Metro and VRE stations. It strikes me that this property should be used as something other than warehouse space. However, time constraints led the Army to take this option off the table without giving it the consideration it merits. I can certainly think of possibilities for the GSA site. As the chairman of the Government Reform Committee, I have jurisdiction over GSA, and I intend to make sure these options are explored. If it makes sense, we are going to follow up on them.

In closing, I called this hearing to highlight what I believe is an unrealistic timeline and flawed planning process. It is my hope that doing so will provide the justification for legislation that would allow the process to move along in a rational manner.