

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 13, 2005

Dear Friend :

As you may know, our community and the State of New Jersey recently received disheartening news regarding Fort Monmouth. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) included Fort Monmouth on its preliminary list of military facilities that it is recommending be reduced in size, consolidated with other facilities, or closed completely. This list has been submitted to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, which will review the list and make a final recommendation to President Bush in September, 2005.

I believe that the Defense Department has made a terrible error, and I intend to fight it. I want to emphasize that the BRAC list of bases is preliminary. The process now shifts from the Pentagon to the nine-member Commission. Bases can still be removed or added to the list.

Fort Monmouth is the Army's premier center for research and development (R&D) in communications, electronics, and network-centric warfare. The work done at Fort Monmouth helps make our soldiers safer and more effective. For example, Fort Monmouth has developed and implemented technology that jams signals intended to detonate roadside bombs; triggers automatic defense measures when missiles are fired at helicopters; and locates the sources of enemy mortar fire within seconds of its launch, to name just a few. Day in and day out, the people working at Fort Monmouth are delivering meaningful military value to the men and women risking their lives in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the criteria used by the Pentagon to measure military value were flawed from the start. Despite several attempts on my part to amend them, the criteria did not weigh the unique and critical value that R&D facilities bring to the battlefield. This is a gaping hole in the Pentagon's assessment – one that will weaken our military's ability to engage and win battles in the battlefield of the future. Another flaw in the Pentagon's assessment of Fort Monmouth is that, in contravention of the statute that created the BRAC process, it neglects the fact that Fort Monmouth has been a leader in integrating the four branches of the military in joint operations. And lastly, closing Fort Monmouth would cost the Defense Department much more than it would save. The highly-educated, highly-skilled people who work at the Fort have unique, proven expertise that cannot be replaced by transferring their work elsewhere or by contracting out to private laboratories. Attempting to do so would inure the Army's ability to conduct cutting-edge R&D and take years to recover.

I will make these and other arguments to the BRAC Commission as it reviews the list and considers whether to include Fort Monmouth in its final recommendation for closure or realignment. Closing bases in the middle of a military action is foolhardy, and doing so in a way that compromises our military's strength is inexcusable. Of additional concern to me is the fact that Fort Monmouth is uniquely suited to assist out state and the entire region should a terrorist attack occur in New York or Washington, D.C. Although the Pentagon's criteria did not allow for consideration of domestic homeland security contributions by facilities like Ft. Monmouth, the Defense Department should not forget that Fort Monmouth, due to its proximity, was integral to the response and recovery efforts following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks of 2001. I will make sure that the Commission has the benefit of that argument.

The coming weeks and months will require a great deal of work from all of us. To be clear, this initial recommendation to the BRAC Commission does not mean that the Fort will be closed for certain. Bases in New Jersey, including Fort Monmouth, have appeared on such lists in previous BRAC cycles, and through community efforts, have avoided closure. Similarly, even if it were to close eventually, there is no danger of the Fort being padlocked immediately and its employees let go.

Following is the timeline for the remainder of this BRAC Round:

- July 1, 2005 – The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) must file a report with the House and Senate Armed Services Committees analyzing the Defense Secretary's recommendations to the BRAC Commission.
- September 8, 2005 – The BRAC Commission must submit its report and recommendations to President Bush.
- September 23, 2005 – The President must approve or disapprove the BRAC Commission's recommendations.
- October 20, 2005 -- If the President disapproves the BRAC Commission's initial recommendations, the BRAC Commission must submit its revised list of recommendations to the President.
- November 7, 2005 – The President must approve the revised BRAC recommendations and send them to Congress for an up-or-down vote without any amendments within 45 legislative days, or the BRAC Commission's list becomes law.
- April 15, 2006 – BRAC Commission goes out of existence.

As you can see, our best window of time for changing the BRAC list is from now until mid-September, 2005.

Saving the Fort and planning for any contingency is a community effort. For my part, I will continue to work with the Save Our Fort Committee, Congressional leaders, and opinion leaders in the Pentagon to secure the five of nine votes on the BRAC Commission to remove Fort Monmouth from the list. I will also be holding town hall meetings to discuss this process and solicit your input. Please visit my website at

[www.holt.house.gov](http://www.holt.house.gov) to learn more about upcoming meetings and the BRAC process generally. I have dedicated a special section of my website to this topic so I can provide you with information.

Though I am disappointed that Fort Monmouth is on the initial BRAC list, I am determined to fight this with every ounce of effort. Please feel free to contact me by calling 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (877-874-4658) or e-mailing me through [www.holt.house.gov](http://www.holt.house.gov).

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress